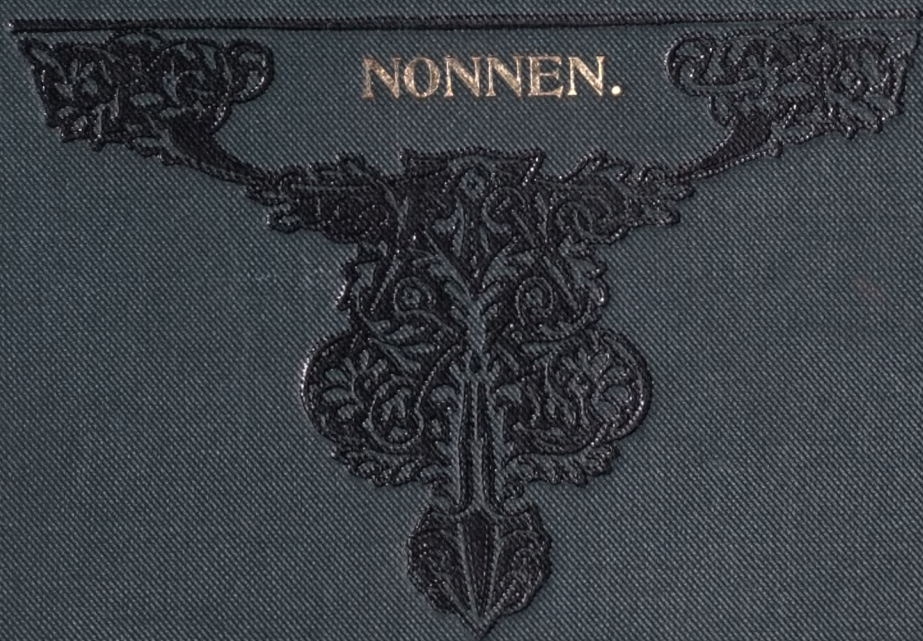


# THE RUBY RING.

NONNEN.





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Book N 733 R

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"You thought yourself alone, you Christian dog."

# THE RUBY RING

OR

TRUTH WILL PREVAIL

---

BY EMILY NONNEN

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FROM THE SWEDISH

BY E. W. OLSON

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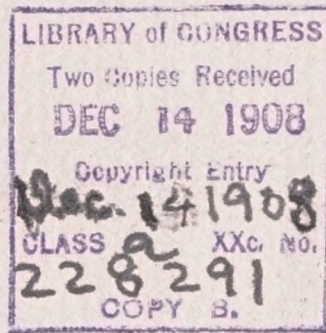
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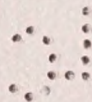
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## FOREWORD.

"The Ruby Ring" is one of a number of excellent stories by Emily Nonnen, an authoress whose family, originally from Holland, in the early part of the last century settled in London, where she was born 1812. In 1819 the Nonnen family moved to Gothenburg. She as well as her brother were well educated, the latter obtaining prominence in various ways. The stories by Emily Nonnen, first published from 1859 to 1864, have had a wide circulation throughout Sweden, and are as popular as ever. Written principally for the edification of the youth of both sexes, they are nevertheless of interest to more mature readers.

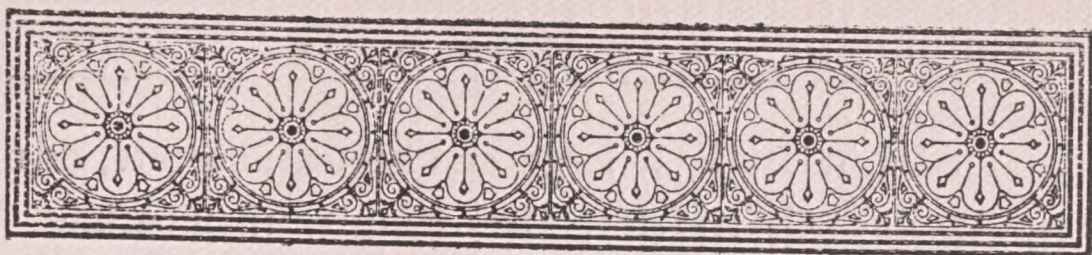
The book in hand is illustrated by Jenny Nystrom, one of the most productive and prominent Swedish illustrators of the present period.

A companion book to "The Ruby Ring" bears the title "The Fortunes of Life, or Struggles of The Ornshield Family."

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## I.

# CHILDHOOD MEMORIES.

**M**ANY a time, while sauntering beneath the linden trees and listening to the hum of honeybees among their sweet blossoms, I have reviewed my past life and thought I would some day write a book about it, which my children, when older, might read and profit by. Bearing them in mind, in the first instance, I may sometimes depart from the common mode of telling one's life story by dropping the thread of my narrative to reflect upon certain happenings which were of more than passing interest to me, and again, when the scenes grow too vivid for pen to picture, I may lay it down and take up the pencil or brush in order that my readers may see them as I saw them, real and lifelike.

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At Lindesvik, a large and beautiful estate, owned by one Gyllenfeldt, the King's chamberlain, I first saw the light of day. Not long after, my mother was left a widow. My father had been a schoolmaster, who, after the fashion of the time, was obliged to go from house to house teaching the children to read and write. Had conditions favored him, he might have made a better career and reached a higher station in life, for he was a gifted writer, as witness many an essay and poem carefully preserved by my mother, who on memorable occasions would bring forth these cherished manuscripts and read them to me. The people round about spoke of him as a man of great prudence and often recalled his witty sayings.

Being a child of but tender age at my father's death, all my early recollections cluster about my mother, my very first memory going back to the time when I sat in her lap and sought to wipe away her tears or unconsciously called back the smile to her lips with my childish prattle.

At a very early age I was permitted to go along with her to the nearby country church on Sundays. She then wore a black skirt, gathered in ample folds, a neat, close-fitting jacket of the same jet-black shade and a white kerchief upon her

head. As for myself, I remember very well how my bosom swelled with boyish pride over the bright buttons on the front of my coat.

I clearly recollect the mighty impression the altar-piece made upon my mind and how charmed I was by the grand peal of the organ and the overwhelming sound of the hymn. Possibly the harmony was not all that a critic might wish, but the devotion of the singers was beyond question, and never in after years did music so deeply impress me.

Psalms—the hymns of the Swedish Church—were the first that I memorized, and at an early age I could recite quite a number of them by heart. My mother herself taught me to read and write, and as I was an apt pupil, she believed, in common with most mothers, that her son was a budding genius.

Our little cottage in the woods, with its vegetable and flower garden adjoining, seemed to me a very paradise. True, the red paint on the walls was almost gone, but what little there was left made a pretty contrast to the dark green pine-trees. Winter or summer, these were always beautiful, whether glistening snow weighed down their branches or the new bright-green shoots of early summer gave

out their fragrant ozone. Oft in the still summer evening the thrush would sit there warbling his tender madrigal.

The garden was my especial delight. In a little spot all my own I planted, higgledy-piggledy, spinach and hollyhocks, kale and carnations, daisies and potatoes, and all thrived well together and to my childish eyes looked wondrous fine.

The cottage contained but a single room, and that a gloomy one. There my father's old books were carefully arranged in rows on open shelves trimmed with strips of paper ornately cut out by hand. On the opposite wall an old-fashioned, gaudily painted Dalecarlian clock ticked leisurely, and alongside stood a cupboard ornamented in homely fashion with great red roses on a blue background and in the center my mother's name traced with many curves and snarls. Along the rafters in the ceiling ran white fringes, made and hung by my mother's own hands.

The spinning-wheel had its own proper place in one corner. There my mother was usually at work, and as she spun she would tell me what my father had told her from the books he had read. Or she herself read out of her well-worn Bible and hymnbook and spoke so beautifully of the love of



My bosom swelled with childish pride.



God and his only begotten Son toward man, and especially toward little children, that I was very much moved and promised her that I would always be a *real* good boy. I was quick-tempered, however, and before long I would forget my good resolve and be very, very naughty. This was often the case at the manorhouse of the estate, where I used to take a delight in provoking the anger of the young barons.

Lindesvik was situated on a neck of land that jutted out into the bay, and up to the main building led a drive-way, overshadowed by avenues of linden-trees more than a hundred years old. Such trees grew also here and there among the pine-woods on the cliffs, which sloped abruptly down to the water's edge. The soil was fertile, and cultivated fields extended far and wide on both sides. These might have yielded richer harvests, but for the fact that the baron neglected farming for riding and hunting, leaving the superintendent to manage the estate according to his own sweet will.

The Baroness Gyllenfeldt, unlike her husband, was not fond of company, but in this, as well as in other matters, yielded to the will of her liege lord, probably less from principle than from her gentle nature and frail health. Toward her child-

ren she was weak and affectionate to a fault, seldom refused them anything, and rarely left them out of sight.

Herman, the eldest son, was most like his mother. He was slow, gentle, even-tempered and prone to be lazy.

The next eldest was Louise. She gave one the impression of being haughty, seemed to warn one to keep at a respectful distance and showed coldness towards all, but once on intimate terms with her, one would find her more agreeable than might be supposed.

Charles Emil, the third in order, was a handsome and sprightly lad, liked by all who did not come in close contact with him, while to his comrades he was malevolent and treacherous and often unkind to those beneath him.

The best child of the four was Clara, eleven years old at the time of which I am writing. She was a sweet girl and so well liked that she was called the Pearl of Lindesvik.

She was the little friend of the sick and the poor, and as her mother never could deny her anything, she had no trouble in getting her consent to have the housekeeper fill a basket of good things for the needy, whenever she wanted to make her

visits of charity. When this little beam of sunshine with her full basket entered some dingy hut, where a child was crying or some poor old person lay sick, it seemed to the tenants like a visit from one of the little angels of heaven.

She spoke childish words of kindness and comfort to all, and when she crossed the threshold to depart, she was followed by many a blessing from shrunken lips.

In summer she was wont to dress in very light colors, and on Sundays and holidays the little misses of the manor-house always wore white. We children would often bind a wreath of blue cornflowers for Clara, and you should have seen how charmingly it crowned her sheaf of golden tresses, beneath whose waves beamed her great eyes of deeper blue.

Among us children she acted as peace-maker, and was always ready to set things to rights, when there was a falling out between playmates. Somehow, we all took reason when she made her appeal, spoken in words as soft and melodious as the twitter of birds.

My mother, who was an expert housekeeper, often went to the manor-house to help out with the work, such as cooking, baking, fancy laundering, and in the slaughtering season. I was wont to

accompany her; and later on, whether for my fresh and sturdy appearance or my rollicking disposition, I found such favor that I was permitted to come alone to play with the children, and, when they grew older, to share their studies.

In some ways, I already knew a bit more than they. I could guide them to the best strawberry patches in the woods and show them where the finest raspberries grew. I dared climb the tallest trees to gather birds' eggs and taught them how to bind baskets of ferns and grasses in which to bring our booty home.

I went out with the boys in their boat and helped them row or managed the sails, and for Midsummer's Eve I brought a mass of leaves and flowers for the girls and helped them bind wreaths for the may-pole. Whenever a birthday or namesday was to be celebrated it was I to the woods in quest of the prettiest things growing wherewith to decorate the tea table.

On such occasions I would sometimes venture to recite a congratulatory verse or two of my own making. I would pen my lines with great pains on a daintily tinted sheet of paper, and as no member of the genteel house of Gyllenfeldt had the gift of making rhymes, my verses were greatly admired.

With the baroness I was in great favor. When she took long walks, I had the honor of carrying her cloak and campstool, and when she wished to send some one in to the neighboring town of Uddevalla, and there was no one else at hand, I was entrusted with the message. This made me feel that she had confidence in me, and I was always punctual so as not to forfeit the trust.

The least friendly member of the family was the old baron himself. He was distant and stern toward his subordinates, which might also account for his manner toward me, and again, he may have had a lurking suspicion that the companionship of the schoolmaster's son might breed boorishness in his own children. Be that as it may, he did not oppose the plan of the baroness to have me study with their children.

In age midway between Charles Emil and Herman, I was in a position to compete with both. That this would be beneficial to them the baroness and the tutor agreed. The latter showed me every kindness and permitted me to take all the subjects studied by his other pupils.

Instruction in English was given specially by Miss Millicent, the tutoress of the girls. She was with us a great deal and often took us for an out-

ing, when we were required to speak nothing but English, for it was the purpose of the baroness to replace her with a French governess as soon as the girls could speak the English language fluently.

Thus I passed many happy days, darkened now and then by a tiff with Charles Emil, whose haughty airs and mischievous pranks I resented, for while I was fully as proud as he, I thought, like most others of low station in life, that haughtiness was found only among the upper classes. But for Miss Clara, my stay in the genteel family would have come to a sudden end after our first quarrel. She made peace between us, and after the truce all five of us hurried down to the bay, where the "Elf Queen" lay rocking on the waves. The boat was quickly unfastened from its moorings and we were soon gliding merrily over the waters on toward a fir-crowned point, where we abandoned ourselves to childish frolics. The cliffs echoed with shouts and laughter; Herman grew as sprightly as any of us, and even the staid and frumpish Miss Louise stopped moralizing for once and joined with zest in all the games. Tired of playing, we strolled far into the wildwood picking berries and gathering linneas, with which the girls decked their hats.

These outings I enjoyed hugely, so much so

that I let pass unnoticed the slurs whereby Charles Emil time and again sought to show the son of the workingman his proper place. This he would do whenever he thought his brother and sisters grew too confidential with me, and more especially when the tutor had a word of praise for me. For we returned to our books from these excursions, and at the end of the lesson hour he sometimes had an encouraging remark for the poor schoolmaster's son.

When this happened, I was busy all the way home through the woods building beautiful castles in the air or lost myself in dreams of future honors and distinction. I felt that fate had wondrous things in store for me, but what, I could not tell. Amid such reveries I reached my mother's cottage, the sight of which always warmed my heart, for, after all, it was there my happiest hours were passed.

While my mother sat in the gloaming spinning her flax, I would rehearse to her the day's lessons or tell of our jolly games. In return, she would impress some golden teaching on my young mind, which has served as a guiding star through life.

"My dear Carl," she would say, "a liar is no better than a robber. Your father used to say that the slightest departure from the truth did more

harm than we can imagine, and he was so wise, your dear old father.”

Sometimes I read aloud from some interesting book lent to me from the manorhouse library. She listened with rapt attention, while smoothing the twirling thread or wielding the knitting-needles; but as soon as the great Dalecarlian clock struck eight she laid aside her spinning and knitting and turned to the Bible and hymnal for her evening devotion.

With soft and quavering voice she would take up a melody, in which my childish treble joined, and thus the widow and her son approached the throne of the heavenly Father to confide to him their troubles and lay their hearts at his feet.

I then snuggled down into my bunk and passed calmly into the wonderland of dreams. If by chance I awoke in the night, I might overhear my mother speaking with such confidence to the Lord, as though he had stood before her in person. This was especially the case during the time I was being prepared for confirmation, which took place early, I being but fourteen years old. My mother thought me too young, but the baron insisted and overruled her protests.

But the matter gave her grave concern. “He is still so young,” she said, speaking of me to God,

“still in the heyday of his boyhood: how can I trust his sincerity?” And she prayed that she might some day come before the throne of heaven, saying, “Lord, behold the treasure Thou didst entrust to me. Pure and sanctified, I now return him to Thy care; but, dear Lord,” she added, “only by Thy guidance can this be done. Teach him, therefore, through Thy Holy Spirit, to walk in righteous paths and keep him ever under thy protecting wings.” She faltered, and there were tears in her voice. Then I also prayed—prayed that I might always so live as to bring joy to her dear heart.

In after years, when at times a feeling of sweet peace and comfort would steal over me, I knew not how, or I was rescued as by a miracle from some great peril, I have rejoiced in the belief that in those very moments my mother was praying for her boy. And why might it not be so? On the Jacob’s ladder of prayer the angels still pass up and down to do God’s bidding. And the Lord himself hath said, “Pray, and it shall be given unto you! Seek, and ye shall find.”

I have dwelt long upon these memories, because they form a distinct period of my life, isolated from the rest by a sudden change and seemingly all the

more hallowed through my forcible expulsion from the Eden of my childhood.

Children are prone to think that grown people look back upon their childhood with nothing but pleasant memories of those early days. They imagine that we discount the sorrows that to them seem deep and heavy, but it is a fact that to us, who have passed through the great trials of life, the petty troubles of the child are as nothing. We have climbed the mountains, from whose summits the foothills look like a level plain.

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## II.

### The Ring.

ONE warm summer day—I remember it as though it were yesterday—I went to the manorhouse with a little sewing box I had made for Miss Clara. After handing over the gift, I waited in the hallway to learn whether the tutor, who was slightly ailing, would be able to hear us recite that day. The baroness then sent word for me to come up to her room.

This was a light and cheerful corner room with one window commanding a view of the bay, the other of the forest. The baroness was seated in a great upholstered armchair by the latter window, with a black lace shawl thrown over her shoulders.

She appeared frail and sickly, but her face was

still beautiful. Holding in one hand a small jewel case, she spoke with faint voice:

"I have here a broken ring which I should like to have repaired at once, but to-day there is no one going to town but Lars of the Millrace farm, and him I dare not trust. But you have often run errands for me and shown yourself prompt and trustworthy: would you be so kind as to take this ring to the jeweler for me? You know the place, for you have been there before with bracelets and trinkets, I believe."

"Yes; I was there only a week ago, with Miss Louise's watch chain," said I.

"Very well; be careful with the ring, and tell the jeweler I want it Saturday the very latest. It is an heirloom, handed down from my grandmother, and on that day I expect an aunt of mine, who likes to see me wear it. Now, my lad, I'll place it in this little case, and I want you to be very careful with it."

With a slight pressure of her finger the lid of the little red box opened. She placed the ring between two pads of white velvet and then closed the case with a snap. I saw but a glimpse of the precious ring, but I thought it the prettiest thing I had ever seen. The baroness wrapped the case

in paper, tied the package with a bit of twine and entrusted it to my hands. Proud of the trust, I made a deep bow and assured her that her orders would be promptly carried out.

So great was my anxiety over the treasure that I dared not put it in my pocket, but carried it tightly gripped in my hand.

It was a charming morning, with the air still cool and clear. The avenue of lindens stood in full bloom, and bees by the thousands were buzzing, honey-laden, among the fragrant blossoms.

Reaching the public highway, I hastened on, glancing ever and anon at the little package in my hand, as if to assure myself it was still there. The farther I got, the more I thought of the ring, wondering how it really looked. The baroness had spoken of it as a thing of great value, and as having at one time belonged to her grandmother, all of which set me pondering what it might be worth and how old it was.

To my youthful mind all pretty things had an irresistible charm. If the ring sparkled so beautifully in the chamber of the baroness, I reasoned, how wonderful would be its lustre here in the bright sunlight!

I had not then heard the legend of Psyche,

who opened the forbidden box, but now I can readily imagine she must have been moved by the same curiosity that I felt as I proceeded along the road, constantly thinking of the treasure concealed in that little parcel.

Why not take a peep at it? It would do no harm. How, then, could it be wrong? I need not even take the ring out of the case, but simply look at it where it lay. Reasoning thus with myself, I began to loosen the twine, but my hand trembled. I felt as though some one had laid a hand on my arm. Then I let go of the twine and tried to fix my thoughts on some other object, but shortly the temptation returned, stronger than before, and I removed the paper.

The little red leather case looked so dainty. It could not be hard to open. I would try—but not here, on the public highway. A little further on there ran a byway through the woods, and there I turned out. Where the road crossed a brook that wound its way along under the dense foliage, there was a rustic bridge. There I sat down. After looking guardedly in both directions, and spying no one near, I pressed the spring and the lid was flung open.

On its bed of white velvet lay a brilliant ruby

encircled with diamonds. The gold ring in which the gems were set had parted, yet I could place it around my finger. How those jewels sparkled! The sunlight falling on those diamonds was reflected in all the colors of the rainbow. I wished I were rich, that I might own gems of such beauty. I even fell into reveries, as I would sometimes do, and my day dreams carried me far away into fancy's wonderland.

The spell was suddenly broken. I thought I heard approaching footsteps, and hurried to place the ring back in its case, but my fingers trembled from fear and the ring dropped out of my hand. With a faint tinkle it struck against a log in the bridge and disappeared. I stooped down quickly, but not a glimpse of the glittering jewel could I detect.

In despair I threw myself down, crawled around on hands and knees, scrutinized every log, looked into every knothole, tore off every loose piece of bark and peered through the cracks into the water, straining my eyes to the utmost, but all in vain. The ring was nowhere to be found.

I gave up my hopeless search. It was a terrible moment. For a while I was paralyzed with despair. When I regained my senses, the search

was renewed and extended even to the banks of the brook. I tore up tufts of grass, scratched around among the leaves and left no stone unturned, all to no purpose.

What was I to do? As one evil breeds another, my first thought was to go and throw myself into the bay or run away from home, for how could I ever show myself at Lindesvik after so thoughtless a betrayal of my trust? Only the thought of the sorrow I would inflict on my mother caused me to change my rash purpose.

I next fell to devising some explanation of the loss. The road was a lonely one, and I might say I had been robbed, but then they would upbraid me for taking a byway when the distance was but a trifle longer by the main road.

Wild thoughts chased each other in my feverish brain, until I remembered my mother's precept, "A liar is no better than a robber," when I asked myself whether I could face her with a falsehood on my lips.

The day was now so far spent that I might have gone to town and back again, and I feared my mother was growing anxious. I was compelled to decide for myself what to do. In the hour of

trial she would always turn to God and pray for aid; why not I?

I fell on my knees and prayed fervently, beseeching the Lord to grant that I might find the ring. Arising, I again renewed the search, confident of success, but my efforts proved as fruitless as before.

At last, with slow and reluctant steps, I turned homeward. Everything around me looked so different, it did not seem the same road. One false step had so changed the beauty of God's green earth that the things I had rejoiced in a little while before now gave me pain.

With a shudder I crossed the court-yard of Lindesvik. The baron was standing there examining a new riding horse. I attempted to sneak by him unobserved, for it seemed more dreadful to face him than the baroness, but he had already noticed me and asked sternly,

"What is the matter, boy, are you sick?"

I was so frightened I could not reply, but simply stammered. He asked me whether anything had happened to the boys, and commanded me to answer him instantly.

"The ring—it fell—it is lost," was all I could say.

“What!—You scamp, do you mean to say you have lost my wife’s ruby ring, that priceless heirloom! Didn’t I warn her of the folly of entrusting such a treasure to a careless boy like you. Yes, and probably worse than that, for who knows, maybe . . . Out with the whole truth at once, young fellow, or else . . .”

The wrath of the baron was stayed, but what he said hurt me so keenly that after the lapse of many years I still recall the outburst, word for word. He was interrupted by the baroness, who, hearing him talking in a loud voice, emerged from an arbor near by.

When she learned that her ring was lost she almost fainted. When she regained her equipoise, her anger was even worse than I had expected.

By and by, the members of the family and the servants were gathered, and in the presence of all I had to tell my sad story. It was hard to find words, and a painful moment it was, made doubly painful by the fact that my words were doubted. My sorrow turned to anger, when the strain was relieved by the suggestion of Miss Clara that they all go down to the bridge on a renewed search. She was sure, said she, that the ring could not remain hidden from so many eyes.

The suggestion found favor, and all present, large and small, started for the bridge, except the baroness and her maid. The latter was unfriendly to me, and her whisperings and significant winks and nods irritated me more than ever before. Summoning new courage, I went with the rest.

We searched and searched, but all to no purpose.

When we returned, the baroness whispered something in the ear of her husband, who at once ordered the servants to go through my pockets.

However deeply I regretted that I had yielded to my curiosity, yet, to be suspected of theft on that account I thought was going too far. Pale and cold I stood while they ransacked my person and turned my pockets inside out.

The young ladies wept and the boys were shocked, but I was beside myself with rage and after the ordeal called out loudly:

"I am going home to mother: she knows I never tell a lie."

And without listening to what the bystanders said, I rushed down to our peaceful cottage home.

"Mother," I asked with tearful voice, "have I ever stolen anything or told you a lie?"

She turned pale and anxiously inquired what had happened.

Her agony added to my despair. I was overcome by my feelings, and for a few moments my emotions bound my tongue. Then I confessed.

It was terrible to see how she suffered, my dear mother, and now I began to realize the awful effect of what I had done. Her good reputation was her only treasure, and now I, her own child, had robbed her of that by putting a blot on her name.

"But, mother dear," I stuttered, "you—you trust me, do you not?"

"Yes, my dear, to me you have never yet told an untruth, and I cannot believe it of you now, or you could not look me calmly in the eye, but you are, nevertheless, guilty of doing a great wrong. You may not be aware that you sinned by yielding to your curiosity. And then to become so angry!"

"But, mother, if they make a false charge against me, haven't I a right to resent it?"

"My child," she calmly continued, "your ill temper only made matters worse. We can only pray God that it may please him to let the truth come to light, and I doubt not that the facts will be known in due time, just so we put our trust in the Lord. But now you must go up to the manorhouse

with me and ask to be forgiven and try to regain their good opinion of you. Haven't they always been extremely kind to you? Think of how much you have learnt up there. It should make you grateful and humble. Ingratitude is a grievous sin. I have always thought that with such excellent schooling you might go to Gothenburg and prepare for teaching."

My mother, it appeared, had no inkling of my ambitious plans. I had mapped out a career quite different from that of a humble country schoolmaster. But at this moment I had no taste for ambitious dreams. I was so downcast that for a long while I could not pick up heart to accompany her to Lindesvik.

I shall not dwell on what transpired there. Suffice it to say that the baroness, who was a lady of great kindness of heart, softened at my mother's tears and my own fervent prayers to be believed and forgiven, was ultimately reconciled.

With a kindness, for which I am ever indebted to her, she persuaded her husband to permit me in the future to continue with their children in study and play. That would put me to the test and show whether or not I were worthy of their confidence and forgiveness.

At this outcome little miss Clara was highly elated. She had always taken my part. I myself might have enjoyed myself as before, but for a certain suspicious air about the place, especially among the servants. The lady's maid wanted my place for a little nephew of hers, and I was well aware that to carry her plan through she used every means to keep alive the suspicions resting on me.

This grieved me deeply, but Clara and Miss Millicent did their best to comfort me. The latter, herself a stranger among strangers, knew how it felt to be without friends. The two urged me to be of good cheer, banish the thought of lurking suspicions and by my behavior disprove them. The truth, said they, would surely be known sooner or later, just so I kept praying to God and trusting in his grace.

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### III.

## THE BIRTHDAY.

ON Miss Louise's birthday, which occurred at the height of the summer season, we were given a half holiday in the afternoon in order to celebrate the event. After many different plans had been proposed and rejected, a picnic and supper in the woods was determined upon. Some young people from the city and the neighboring country places were invited. It was a glorious evening, and everybody was as happy as a lark.

I went ahead with a couple of well-filled baskets to the appointed place. There I had a throne prepared in advance, for the queen of the day, a little rustic seat covered with moss and decked with wild flowers. It had its place in a pretty dell under some weeping birches whose slender white trunks

stood out clearly against a dark back-ground of evergreens. The drooping foliage formed a canopy and the floor of the coronation hall was covered with a velvety green carpet. Through a gap the blue waters of the bay could be seen glittering in the evening sun.

My task done, I stood watching a ship that sailed by before a gentle breeze. That moment I was seized with a weird longing to sail away to some distant land, where I might earn a great fortune and buy a new ring for the baroness, like the one I had lost, whose image seemed burnt into my memory.

While I stood there alone, lost in dreams of future days, the company burst merrily through the woods, carrying still other laden baskets.

These were set aside, and we sought a grassy plot where the dance went merrily on, while I sung the tunes I had picked up from Blind Peter, the fiddler.

When the dance was over, Miss Louise took her place in the mossy seat I had prepared for her. Little Clara had made a coronet of flowers, which she placed on her head and I put in her hand a cane entwined with floral wreaths, in lieu of a scepter. Now the queen commanded that the tables be

set for the repast. On a large table cloth, spread on the grass, were placed plates, cups, bread-baskets and other dishes containing the eatables. I had built a fire near by, where the young ladies served as her majesty's cooks, all hands assisting in preparing the tea.

"Why, whatever has become of the silver creamer?" Clara asked petulantly.

"It must have been forgotten," said Charles Emil, "I've unpacked everything from the baskets, and it wasn't there."

"Indeed it was," said Louise; "I remember plainly that we brought it out and put it in with the rest. Mama advised us not to bring it along, but I thought it would be *so* much nicer to use the silver service. What *can* have become of it?"

"It was Carl who carried the basket with the silverware," said Herman. "He took it and went ahead. — Carl," he called to me, "what has become of the silver creamer?"

"I took the baskets, but I didn't know what was in them," I replied, reddening, I knew not why.

"Our dear Carl probably lost it the same way as he did the ring, although there was no bridge to pass," taunted Herman.

"How was it about that?" inquired one of the

invited boys from the city. "I heard tell about the baroness having a ring lost or stolen. Tell me, was it a valuable one? And did that boy" — he lowered his tone to a whisper and motioned toward me — have anything to do with it?"

"Let's not talk any more about it," said Charles Emil evasively, "he will be found out some day."

There was more tittle-tattle among the boys, with sly glances at me, which set my blood boiling. I could control myself no longer. Stepping up to the whole crowd, with flushed face and eyes aflame, I shouted in angry tones:

"I am no thief. If anyone calls me that, I'll knock him down and kick him!"

The other boys drew back, but Charles Emil snickered scornfully.

In my wrath I was about to rush at him when an excited voice called out, "Carl, be careful what you do!" and a small hand was laid on my raised arm. Several others stepped between me and my accuser. Then my hands dropped and I rushed like mad into the thick of the forest.

I tore through dense thickets and scaled fallen timbers—nothing could detain me—and stopped, breathless, in a secluded spot, where some granite slabs formed a cave covered with ivy. There I

threw myself headlong on the damp ground among the ferns that grew within. I covered my face with my hands and lay for a long while prone on the ground with my brain in wild turmoil.

How long I lay thus I know not, but I well remember that I was aroused from the stupor by a gentle voice that whispered my name, and when I looked up I saw Miss Clara sitting beside me. She had stolen to the spot with such gentle footfall on the mossy ground that I had not heard her approach.

"Carl," said she in a sympathizing tone, "how are you feeling? This is sad indeed, but won't you come along with me now? They haven't gone yet, but they are just getting ready to start for home. The boys were very mean to you, I admit, but they are not so very bad, after all."

"No, Miss Clara, I cannot go with you," said I. "I know it was thoughtless and very wrong of me to open the jewel box, but I had no idea it would have such awful consequences."

"Dear Carl," the kind little girl continued, "Miss Millicent tells us we must guard against the first misstep, for we know not where it may lead, but neither did I imagine a bit of curiosity would be so dangerous. But what shall we do? Now sit up, Carl, "she coaxed," and let us think it over."

"Thank you, Miss Clara, you are too kind," said I, rising. "But I can stay at Lindesvik no longer. I owe very much to your people for their kindness. My poor mother will be grieved, I know, but I cannot help it—I must away from here. How it is to be done I don't know, but I'll manage, somehow, to get along in the world, and show them I am not as bad as they think."

"You are right, I admit—so let us devise a good plan right here." She put her head between her hands and set to thinking.

I sat looking at her in silence, and in that moment she seemed to me a little angel sent from heaven.

"I've got it," she said, jubilantly. "I'll speak to mama and papa about it. If I ask papa real kindly, I am sure he can get a good place for you, who know so much more than the other boys, for so the tutor told Miss Millicent. While you are gone, she and I will look after your dear mother, and some day you will come back and show them all that you are just as good and honest as papa himself. Won't that be fine?" She laughed with delightful anticipation.

I kissed her little white hand reverently and spoke solemnly, "Miss Clara, your words shall come

true, for it shall be the aim of my life to show myself worthy of your confidence. I know I have many weaknesses to overcome, but I will pray to God, and he will surely help me."

"I will pray for you too," she said earnestly, "but why not pray here together? God will hear us in the woods as well as in the church."

So we both kneeled down and prayed in a soft whisper: "Our Father who art in heaven." When we arose the full moon beamed down upon us between the leafy branches overhead. A thrush in a nearby fir-tree sang his vesper song. The evening primrose shed its fragrance to the breeze. All nature was at peace, and even in my own bosom the storm had subsided.

In pensive silence we walked side by side through the forest, reaching the open road, where we were met by a servant in search of Miss Clara. I bid her good night, and with my heart still throbbing with emotions undefined I hastened through the twilight gloom of that calm summer night down to our little cottage beneath the pines.

My mother had already retired. I kissed her and received her blessing before I cuddled down into my low bunk, where the sweet, sound sleep of childhood soon erased all the bitter memories of the day.



## IV.

### THE FAREWELL.

**T**HE next day I received word to appear before the baron and with palpitating heart I went to the manorhouse.

My hand trembled visibly when I turned the knob and entered into the presence of my austere master.

The baron sat at his desk and was just finishing a letter, which he folded and sealed before turning to me where I stood huddling close to the door and fumbling my cap awkwardly.

"Step nearer, Carl," said he in a more friendly tone than I had expected. "Clara tells me you wish to leave Lindesvik to try your fortune elsewhere. All things considered, I believe myself that is the best thing to do; and since you have always,

except for this last sad affair, proved a good boy and an apt scholar as well, I have no objection to getting a place for you or start you working at some trade. But you must choose for yourself."

After a moment's thought, I answered deliberately:

"Kind sir, if you will let me, I would prefer to go to sea."

He swung suddenly around in the chair, exclaiming:

"To sea!—Why so?"

"Because," said I, giving my cap an awkward twist, "I have always longed to see a bit of the world, and then, people who travel always get rich. That's what Ole at Fish Point did. He brought home a lot of pretty things, and I'd like to get rich too, so I could buy another ring for the baroness."

"That is more easily said than done," he resumed, regretfully. "However, I go to Gothenburg in a few days. Then you may go along, and I will see what I can do for you."

With a heart full of joy and gratitude I hurried away to tell the glad news to Miss Clara, who stood in the hallway outside, anxiously waiting. I knew, of course, that to her I owed my great good

fortune, for such I deemed my chance to get out into the wide world.

But the hardest part was still left. It remained to impart my plans to my mother, and I had good reason to fear that she would not view them in the same rosy light.

The ever helpful Miss Clara offered to go with me to plead with my mother, provided Miss Millicent would excuse her from an English recitation.

Since that day many years have passed, but it still gives me real pain to recall my mother's sorrow when she heard what I had determined to do, and why. She refused to be comforted, and it required our combined efforts to get her consent to my going. Nevertheless, when finally persuaded that it would be for my own good, she forgot her sorrow and went eagerly to work to fit me out for my first voyage. Many a hot tear fell upon the clothes she sewed for me, but meanwhile ardent prayers for the safety and protection of her only son were wafted on high. When I recall this to mind, my eyes fill with tears, and to this day I thank God for having given me a pious mother and for having heard her prayers. There is a weird sweetness in thus harking back now and then to life's springtime.

The day of parting had come, and my little



A gentle voice whispered my name.



blue trunk was packed. The whole family was gathered at the manorhouse and the great carriage drove up. As I held my mother's hand in mine, I would gladly have changed my mind and stayed at home, but it was now too late.

Miss Clara came over and took me aside. "Here," said she, secretly placing a small object in my hand, "keep this as a memento of Lindesvik, and never worry about your mother, for Miss Millicent and I will take good care of her."

It was a bright blue purse, on which I had seen her at work. In the center, embroidered with silver thread, were the words: "Truth will Prevail." Inside was a small sum of money, probably all her savings.

I wished to thank her, but just then the baron ordered me to mount the driver's seat. I barely had time to give my mother the farewell kiss and receive her blessing.

"Happy journey!" sounded from all sides. All I saw that instant was my mother weeping and Miss Clara trying to comfort her, and that scene remains forever graven into my memory.

As long as I could see them, I kept waving my blue, checked handkerchief, but a turn of the

road soon cut off the view, and the tallest pinnacle of the manorhouse disappeared.

We had not gone far when a washout on the main road barred further progress, and it looked for a moment as though we would be compelled to turn back, when the baron gave orders to take the byway, and thus on my journey out into the world I was forced to cross the ominous bridge.

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## V.

### THE VOYAGE.

**M**Y first sea voyage passed off without any adventures, but I still remember how my heart sank within me when I stood watching the wooded hills of my native place disappear one by one. The steamer picked her way through the fiords and the islands along the coast until we reached the city of Marstrand, where at length we stood out to sea. This was my first view of the great ocean, and methought I heard the waves singing to me, as to the Vikings of yore: "Away, away, o'er the deep blue sea!"

After eight hours of pleasant sailing we were off the harbor of old Elfsborg and its ancient fort.

The roadstead is worthy of a great maritime city. The year being a prosperous one, there were

now, at the height of the sailing season, no ocean vessels lying at anchor but those loading or unloading, or laid up for repairs at the docks. At the pier there were, however, many schooners and a few steamers ready to start.

The baron was met by business friends, who accompanied him to the hotel. I got comfortable lodging with one of the hands on our boat, and did not see the baron except at stated times.

When I called on him one day at his request, he told me to accompany him to Captain Ehrnberg of the brig Aurora, who, needing a few more hands, had agreed to hire me as cabin-boy.

We went down to the quay, where the captain instructed me to meet him at the seamen's mission the next day.

The captain, always referred to on shipboard as the "old man," was short, thickset, weather-beaten and gruff-visaged. Everything on board was polished and shining bright. The cabin was handsomely furnished, and there I detected something which at once caught my eye, namely, a good-sized collection of books.

The baron paid us a second call and held a long talk with the captain. Leaving the cabin, he

turned to me, where I stood taking instruction from a sailor, and said:

"I trust you will do well, young man. Should you get into trouble, you may turn to me, otherwise I do not wish to hear from you until you have shown what you are good for."

He turned to go, then faced about, and drew from his pocket a small parcel, saying:

"This is from my daughter Clara, and here is a letter which was enclosed in mine."

I stuck to my duties until relieved, when I hurried back of a pile of sails and impatiently opened my package. It contained a copy of the New Testament with my name, Carl Lennartson, written on the fly-leaf, and under it these words from the Gospel according to St. John, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free." Besides the book, the parcel contained a number of religious tracts sent by Miss Millicent.

The letter contained a few sincere words of farewell, together with an admonition to read a portion from the little giftbook daily. This she asked me never to neglect. I was also urged to read the tracts and to hand a copy to some comrade when opportunity offered.

All this was penned in the large, clear, childish

handwriting of Miss Clara. Then followed a few faltering lines from my mother. Her words were so loving and tender, that the reading of them clouded my eyes with tears.

"Oho, who sits here blubbering? Get out of the way, young fellow, or we'll pitch you overboard!" The words were spoken by a gruff voice.

"Stop that, Chris!" commanded an older sailor, with honest gray eyes half concealed by bushy, yellow brows. "The boy may have got a letter from his mother. It's hard to leave home so young, that I know from experience, for I was only so high"—he held his hand a few feet above the deck—"when I had to leave our poor little fisherman's hut; but mother said just so you fear God and do what's right all will be well, whether on sea or land, says she, and right she was, blessed old heart, that I can prove."

"All right for you, John, but my old woman didn't run to sermonizing," Chris retorted irreverently, "and as to that I reckon you can get along just as well without it."

I had started to my feet at the first voice and dashed the tears from my eyes. Now I went with old John down into the galley, where he asked me what kind of a book I had been reading. When

he learnt that it was the New Testament, he began to talk kindly with me, and after that we spent most of our idle hours talking over its contents.

We were bound for Hamburg. Of that city I remember little but this, that we had to work hard all the time while there. The old man was not given to wasting time in the ports, and he knew how to keep his men at work. We toiled incessantly from morning till night and found time for neither reading nor thinking.

One of our comrades played the violin, and during fair weather we used to while away our leisure moments dancing to his polka and waltz tunes. Then again, he would play sweet sentimental airs, to which we would listen with rapt attention. When he tired of playing or when the weather was rough, the sailors spent their time spinning yarns.

Thus the time was passed, and I would have felt quite at ease on board, but for my suspicion that the baron had told the captain certain things reflecting on my honesty.

In regard to money and important papers, the captain was rather careless, allowing one thing and another to lie around within easy reach. He had lost certain small sums time and again, so John told

me, and now that I was cabin-boy, he would naturally suspect me if it happened again, provided there were anything questionable in my record. He never said anything to me directly on that score, but I was never permitted to put his cabin in order, except under his very eyes. I complained to John, who explained:

“Never mind that, my boy. Fear God and do what is right, then all will go well with you. This is only a test. ‘As silver is tested by fire and gold in the crucible, so the Lord tries the hearts of men,’ a wise man has said. He also said: ‘The end of a thing is better than the beginning; an humble spirit is better than haughtiness.’ Therefore, you should have patience and wait. The truth will be known in due time.”

To keep on waiting was more easily said than done, but luckily the captain kept us so busily at work that I had no time to worry about the matter.

We were down in Cagliari taking on a cargo of salt bound for Malmo. As soon as the captain had got his clearing papers from that port, a good stiff breeze came up, so we at once set sail.

The next few days we had favorable winds and made good headway. The captain was busy winding up his accounts, and had been in excellent

humor until one day he came over to where John and I were engaged in repairing a sail and said abruptly:

"I had a stack of Italian coins on my desk. They are gone. Have you taken them?"

This angered me, and I assured him on my word of honor that I had not touched the money. But my protestations were not heeded. He searched my person and my trunk, and although finding nothing, he still seemed to suspect me, and closed the examination with these words: "Well, we will look into this again when we reach port."

I was driven almost to the verge of despair. Life seemed scarcely worth living, now that I was pursued by false suspicions even on sea and among total strangers. I grew irritable and reticent, exposed myself to danger time and again and behaved so queerly that old John always kept a watchful eye on me.

Chris tried to cheer me up as best he knew. In rough weather he would offer me a dram from his whiskey-bottle. Although disliking strong drink, I took a taste of it. Chris used to empty his bottle, and on such occasions grew very talkative. Once while tipsy he drew a gold coin from his pocket and asked me to change it for him. I had

but little money, and besides we could not agree on the exact value of the coin, so I took it over and showed it to John.

He gave me a piercing look. "That," said he, "is just the kind of coins the old man lost. How did you get it? Tell the truth right here!"

I calmly told him how it was; then he took me to the captain, to whom I had to repeat my story.

Meanwhile Chris had fallen asleep. The pocket book had dropped from his hand to the deck and opened, scattering the yellow coins about. They were picked up and counted, and were found to make the precise sum lost by the captain. From that moment he treated me more kindly and sought in every way to make good the injuries done me. I was now called upon to tell why I had left Lindesvik, and while the captain found fault with the curiosity that caused my trouble, he held my act a thoughtless misstep rather than a crime.

As soon as we reached the Sound, a couple of detectives came aboard, and after we had anchored at Malmo, Chris was taken by them to the city. As he stepped down the gangplank, I handed him a tract. He made a motion as though he would

throw it into my face, but suddenly changed his mind and put it into his pocket.

From Malmo we went to Malaga to bring back a cargo of fruit. While in that port, the captain showed me a letter offering him the captaincy of the good ship Orion, built for the East Indian trade. He took a few days to consider the matter, and after having decided to accept, he asked me to go with him. India was to my mind a land of wonders. I thanked him for his kindness and with a firm handshake we sealed our agreement to stick together.

Our brig lay in the roadstead ready to set sail, only awaiting the wind. In the meantime, we made occasional trips into the country around the city. At last a breeze came up, and we decided to hoist the anchor along in the day, but before starting the captain wanted to go ashore once more.

While going down the ladder, he was apparently seized with a swoon, for instead of putting his foot in the boat he stepped amiss and plunged into the water, disappearing instantly. The sea being rough, the oarsman was hardly able to keep the boat alongside.

We waited anxiously for the captain to come to the surface, but he seemed to have been drawn

down beneath the vessel, and we dragged in vain for the body.

The shipowners gave orders to the chief mate to take the brig home. On our way back from the Mediterranean I was strongly inclined to go with the East Indian vessel, for my young mind was bent on new adventures.

However, old John's description of Calcutta was not very alluring. He had gone through some sad experiences in a dingy hospital there, with Hindoo attendants, but I hoped to fare better than he, for to me India was the land of fair dreams of fortune. Whenever I thought of it, gold and precious jewels glittered before my mental vision.

We now entered the Skagerack, and speeding before a stiff breeze we were due to pass Vinga in a short time.

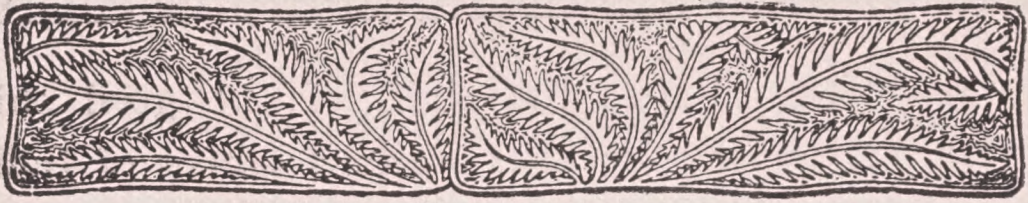
The Skagerack, however, was very rough, and heavy seas continuously broke over the deck. The man at the wheel had great difficulty in steering a true course through storm and darkness. The beacon-lights on shore gleamed but faintly through the night. Suddenly the ship struck a rock and became distressed. We reached the home port under great hardships and became involved in lawsuits and entanglements that almost cooled my passion

for seafaring. But at the sight of the good ship Orion my desire for the precious stones of India was awakened anew, and again I went to the seamen's mission to hire out as a sailor. I was accepted on the Orion, mainly, I believe, on the strength of Captain Ehrnberg's recommendation.

There was no time for me to go home on a visit to my mother, so I merely sent her a letter, enclosing what little money I could spare.

In her next letter she wrote that the baron, with his wife and daughters, was in Stockholm. Herman was at Upsala, trying to graduate from college, and Charles Emil had managed to get a cadetship at the Carlberg military academy. My mother expressed the fear that the parents were not altogether pleased with their children. Miss Louise was enjoying a round of social pleasure, wrote Miss Clara, adding that she herself was considered too young as yet to come out into society, and she only longed back to Lindesvik, with its trees and flowers and twitter of birds.

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## VI.

### A NIGHT OF TERROR.

**A**T Newcastle we took a cargo of coal. On board was a young Englishman, residing in Calcutta, who was advised by his physician to spend some time on the ocean, preferably on board some sailing vessel, to escape the smoke.

When we left the English Channel at the close of May, we had fine summer weather on land and sea, but on reaching the north of Africa we encountered storms with heavy showers with intervals of dead calm, delaying our crossing the line till the 8th of July. I remember well the day, for, having never before crossed the equator, I was ducked after the fashion of sailors. I went safely through the ordeal, and as we proceeded southward toward the Cape of Good Hope, the most delightful weather

prevailed. Off the Cape, however, we had heavy storms to contend with for three weeks, and the weather was cold as a Northern October. But after doubling the Cape, we again steered northward into a region of full summer.

The last day of August, like the day before, was very fine, and especially was the sunset one of remarkable brilliance and beauty.

My day's labor done, I had sat down in a quiet corner to read my Bible. I turned to the Book of Psalms. The beautiful words of the Psalmist, so full of devotion and trust, regaled my soul, and his word painting applied so well to the majestic spectacle before me that, when I closed the book and saw the fiery ball of the sun sink into the ocean, throwing a bridge of gold across the green waves, methought I heard the royal singer still speaking to me in the voice of the sea.

My revery was disturbed by the chief mate walking about the deck as if in search of something. I asked him what he was looking for and received the answer that he thought there was a smell of gas. This is often the case on board vessels with cargoes of coal. Although knowing that, after the formation of gas, fire may start of itself among the coal, we retired to our bunks that night

at eight o'clock, as usual, all but the starboard watch.

At twelve o'clock we were aroused, and I had just reached the deck when the chief mate emerged from his cabin in his night clothes, calling out "Fire!" at the top of his voice.

The captain serenely ordered us to bring up water, open the hatches and get the boats clear. Some of the men were set to work cutting a hole in the deck with axes.

In one part of the hold the fire had not yet started, but the dense gas exploded when it came in contact with the air. The impact tore up the deck and shattered the main mast, which fell, crushing two men. After that complete disorder prevailed, every man struggling to save his own life.

I seized hold of the railing abaft, which was still intact, and clung to it a while, uncertain whether to die by burning or by drowning.

My emotions while clinging there cannot be described. My past life passed in review before me with tremendous rapidity, and the thought of my mother's grief when she should learn of my death struck me with a force that well-nigh dazed me.

The flames weirdly lit up the darkness, revealing here and there pieces of wreckage floating on



A night of terror.



the dark waves. The captain's voice could still be heard through the roar of the flames, and I saw a couple of dark figures moving about near him just before my strength failed and I lost my hold. Dropping to the water, I swam to a raft that had been slipped overboard but was still unoccupied. On that I thought myself safe, but I was still in a sad plight. With clothes soaking wet, I shivered, but less from the chill than from the overwrought state of my mind. Seizing the oars fastened to the raft, I rowed about among the burning or charred wreckage, intent on saving some of my comrades. In the red glare I saw several men clinging to the pieces of burnt or broken masts, and rowed toward them, but before I could reach them, they had been swallowed up by the deep. It was a fearful night, the grewsome terrors of which I can never forget.

To keep warm I kept on rowing, and the ocean current was carrying me further and further away from the burning wreckage until the flames looked like mere sparks at the horizon, dying one by one.

When the last gleam was quenched the darkness and solitude around me seemed more terrible than before. I was wet and hungry; but upon the nervous strain of the last hour followed a faintness

which made me almost insensible to my condition.

I gazed upward at the starry sky. It seemed like a pall hung over my ocean grave. I looked in vain for any of the constellations I knew from boyhood. At last I spied the Southern Cross, but it meant nothing to me, when I thought of Charles' Wain as I used to see it in the Northern sky.

There was not a breath of wind, and the great silence was not broken by even the gentlest lapping of waves against the raft. I was seized with an inexpressible feeling of loneliness.

But now as I recall my past experiences, I am thankful even for these lonely hours, for through the silence and the darkness I perceived the voice of God. The passages I had read shortly before from the Psalms formed the text for silent sermons that inspired me with new courage and filled my heart to overflowing, and there, alone on the vasty deep, I sang out my prayer and praise in the words of an old hymn:

We praise Thee, Lord, who saveth  
In answer to our helpless cry,  
When faith the tempest braveth  
To come before Thy throne on high.  
Thou, at whose words the noises  
Of wind and wave are stilled,

O, let our hearts and voices  
With joy and peace be filled.  
Save us from sin and sorrow,  
For Thy own name the blest,  
That on the last bright morrow  
We reach the haven of sweet rest.

In that solitary hour God seemed nearer to me than ever in the throngs of men, and I felt as safe as though I rested at his bosom instead of floating helplessly about on the boundless ocean.

Step by step, I considered my past life and felt deep remorse over my sins, which now stood before me in the right light. Confessing all my misdeeds and failings, I prayed with fervor that the blood of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, might cleanse me of mine. I prayed long. My soul, like Jacob, struggled with the Lord, and he did not leave me without his blessing. My soul was filled with his peace. I promised, should it be his will to rescue me from my present peril, to live a better life and henceforth walk steadfastly in the paths of righteousness, as in the sight of God.

I regret to say that I have at times lost sight of this my sacred promise, but from that day on a peace and calm that is not of earthly origin pervades my soul. In hours of distress I have often

found that even if we sometimes forget the Lord, He keeps faith with us if we have truly given our hearts to Him.

After this dawn of a new day within me, there followed a natural dawn without. The eastern sky began to glow with the light of approaching day. I now felt the gnawing of hunger, but worse still was my dreadful thirst in this watery desert. I was so weak that I hardly could sit upright. But all my pains were forgotten for the moment, when the morning wind began to blow, awakening the sleeping waves and refreshing my drooping spirits. The light of day inspired me with such vigor that I felt impelled to join in the dance of the billows. It brought back hope to my heart, and I strained my eyes to spy the faintest suggestion of smoke or some speck of white at the horizon, indicating the presence of some steamer or sailing vessel out of the myriads that ply the waters daily.

Nothing came into view, and my downcast eyes again began to survey the bottomless grave below. But just as the sun rose above the waves in all his southern splendor, I sighted a floating object at some distance. I watched it closely. Might it be a boat? No, it was too small for that—but it might be some strange denizen of the deep. It rose and sank and

seemed to bob up and dive down below the surface at will. Soon I noticed something white, resembling a piece of canvas, fluttering in the breeze. As my raft glided nearer, I discovered the figure of a man. Supposing it to be one of the men from the wreck, I grasped the oars and rowed with redoubled strength toward the unfortunate one, whom I found to be our English passenger.

The breeze had now stiffened, making the sea quite choppy, and I had great difficulty in rescuing him. The broken spar to which he clung pitched violently about, but we finally came so near to one another that he risked leaving his craft and swam to mine, which had ample room for both.

We clasped hands with a feeling of great joy, and I thought with gratitude of the baroness who had permitted me to study with her own children and to Miss Millicent, whose drills in English enabled me to converse easily with my new companion.

He narrated his experiences in the disaster of the night before. At the time of the explosion he was alone in the fore part of the ship. He clung to the bowsprit until the fire reached him, when he dropped into the water and swam a long time before encountering the spar on which he saved himself.

"The doctor advised me to keep on the water as much as possible on account of my weak eyes, but he could hardly have meant just this way," he remarked with a grim smile, "for that would be rather too heroic a cure."

"I left my father in England, where he went on business. He is probably back in Calcutta by this time. I wonder whether I will ever see him again."

At these words a shadow flitted across his face and there was a slight quiver of the lips, but he soon regained his courage and good cheer.

After we were two on the raft, the time passed more rapidly. We kept a constant lookout for some vessel to come to our rescue. At last we sighted a sail on the skyline. Breathlessly we watched the little white speck until it passed out of sight.

Mocked by this illusive hope, we were brought to the verge of despair, for, with our strength all spent, it seemed impossible to live through another night.

Suddenly my companion called out:

"Look yonder! You can see better than I."

I turned to where he pointed and saw a faint streak of smoke. It grew more dense as it approached, and a dark object hove in sight. Grad-

ually it took form. White sails stood out against the sky, funnels loomed up, and soon we could see the distinct outline of a great steamer coming toward us at full speed.

Trembling with excitement we fastened our handkerchiefs and mufflers to one oar, which one of us held aloft, while with the other we tried to propel our raft in the direction of the vessel. We tried in every way to attract attention and soon found to our joy that we were observed from the steamer. She slackened her speed and then stopped. A boat was lowered, and with bated breath my comrade, Frank Clermont, and I watched the oarsmen pulling toward us, we ourselves too exhausted to continue rowing.

At last they were alongside of our raft. The strain was too much for me: a black pall was drawn before my eyes and I fell over in a swoon.

When I awoke from my unconscious state, I was lying in a comfortable cabin, surrounded by friendly people, one of whom felt of my pulse, while another poured a spoonful of wine into my mouth.

On a couch opposite lay Frank Clermont, smiling, and an elderly, somewhat portly gentleman stood leaning over him.

"My dear boy, how delighted I am to see you

rally," were the words in which my companion greeted me. "Can you imagine who was the first person I saw on board? Why, my own honorable father, who had been detained in England, the delay affording him the pleasure of fishing his own son out of the sea."

"My friend," said the elder Mr. Clermont, turning to me, "Frank tells me that he owes his life to you. He says he was on the point of giving up from exhaustion when you came to his rescue. I thank you from my heart."

The venerable gentleman shook me by the hand, as did also his son.

I replied in a bewildered manner to their expressions of gratitude, for my brain was still dazed and I could not realize where I was or what had happened.

Frank ordered food, and when I had appeased my hunger, it gradually grew clear to my mind that I was on board a British liner, bound for East India.

In point of equipment the steamer was a veritable floating palace. I cannot speak too highly of the kindness with which all, passengers and crew alike, treated the Swedish sailor who had so unexpectedly become their guest.

Frank said he was jealous of the many kindnesses showered upon me, and I would have been happy and comfortable indeed, but for my late tragic experiences at the burning of the "Orion" and the painful thought of my mother's despair at the news of my having been lost at sea.

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## VII.

### CALCUTTA.

**T**HE time passed rapidly by, and ere long we were off the mouth of the Hooghly River.

I had often heard tell of the many dangers of this waterway. Its muddy waters are literally alive with crocodiles and poisonous snakes, and the channel is very treacherous, requiring the services of welltrained native pilots on every vessel. There are at many points swampy shallows, and vessels grounding thereon are difficult to save.

The passage up the river to Calcutta took twelve hours. We arrived at the mouth of the river just after sunrise, and this was fortunate in more than one sense, for nothing could be more charming than the beauties of India as revealed to us in a moving panorama on that bright sunny day.

At first, nothing but river flats, immense areas covered with rice fields, but the view grows more beautiful further inland. The shores are lined with gigantic tropical trees of luxuriant foliage and covered with flowers of such rare beauty as is scarcely dreamed of in northern lands. The beasts and birds are almost as brightly colored as the flowers. In the shadow of the giant trees stand phantastic sacred shrines and temples, with broad white marble stairs leading down to the sacred river, for the Hooghly is a part of the Ganges delta system.

A more pleasant time for a visit to India than the month of September I cannot imagine. As before, on the Indian Ocean, our meals were served on deck.

During the voyage I had seen some Hindoo passengers, but I had been so engrossed with my own meditations and the attentions of the Clermonts that I took little notice of them, and not until I reached their native country did I begin to study the appearance and habits of the Hindoos, the Singalese, the Talmuls and the other divisions of their race.

As I stood on the deck watching the white-robed people on the shores, some with red or yellow sashes over their white garments, I noticed that a

number of the passengers were similarly dressed, but what surprised me most was the lines in different colors painted on their dark faces, varying with the person.

Mr. Clermont came over to me, and I questioned him in regard to this custom. He replied that each man was in the habit of wearing on his face the sign of the god he worshiped.

For the first time I stood face to face with heathenism. I contemplated it with sadness, a feeling that grew on me as I listened to Mr. Clermont, who explained that of the three hundred millions of people in India only a very small number were Christians, and that the form of Christianity most commonly embraced by them was Catholicism.

I fell to pondering these things so gravely that I hardly heard Mr. Clermont when he asked me whether I still desired to follow the sea or if I would rather take a position in his office.

One of the Hindoos wore in his turban a splendid ruby, on which my eyes were riveted. Turning from that to Mr. Clermont, I replied that seafaring had lost all charm for me. I told him what had led to my becoming a sailor, namely, my youthful ambition to secure wealth in a short time, adding that on the contrary I had become poorer than ever

and had no way of getting back home except as a sailor on some home-bound British vessel.

Mr. Clermont gave me the comforting assurance that I had many friends on board who were willing to give aid, but stated that he especially would provide for me.

"Besides," said he, "you write a good hand and speak English quite readily. You seem to have had a better education than we are accustomed to find among sailors. Wouldn't you like to take a position in my office here in Calcutta. Frank has a high opinion of you and would like to see you stay with us. For my own part, I look upon you as one sent by Providence to save the life of my son, and in order to repay my debt of gratitude, I will do all that I can to promote your welfare. I like you for your own sake, Mr. Lennartson, believing you to be an honest and upright young man and worthy of my confidence."

Bowing politely, I accepted so honorable and generous an offer.

We stood talking together for some little while. It was about six o'clock and the sun nearly down. We were now nearing the city and viewed with admiration the splendid palace of the former king of Oude. Mr. Clermont pointed out Fort William,

the British stronghold, beneath whose bristling guns lay the quay known as Garden Beach.

It was no easy matter for our large ocean liner to pick her way among the great mass of vessels from every part of the globe, that lay moored or anchored all over the harbor. Having finally reached her docks, the landing stage was thrown out, and we stepped ashore.

Just at that moment the sun went down. Soon lanterns began blinking on all sides, the lights of the city shone brightly, and over all the full moon shed a flood of beautiful white light.

A large number of Hindoo servants were down to meet the passengers, some dressed in white, with a red scarf across their shirt bosoms, gold lace on their breasts, and white turbans; others in bluish-gray caftans, red jackets and many-colored turbans, but all in gold braid and with fingers and toes decked with rings. Some of these dark-hued gentlemen wore large beards, others dainty little moustachios.

They greeted the Europeans with extreme courtesy, placing one hand on the breast and bowing gracefully, after which they hurried away to take charge of the luggage of their respective masters, but disdained to carry it ashore. To per-

form that task they called in a number of coolies, a gang of husky, half-naked fellows employed for menial labor.

The elder Clermont having had his baggage landed—his son and myself possessed nothing but what we wore on our persons—the three of us entered a waiting carriage. Two of the liveried attendants stood behind, and with the no less gaily dressed driver in front we were driven along the beautiful esplanade.

All Calcutta seemed to be out enjoying themselves this charming evening. We met gentlemen riding fine Arabian horses, and ladies, old and young alike, attired in the lightest and daintiest of fabrics, driven in carriages, all with coachmen and lackeys in gaudy livery.

The buildings, which looked like marble palaces, had flat roofs and were surrounded by elegant colonnades. They lay imbedded in rich foliage and a wealth of flowers.

When we reached the luxurious Clermont mansion, I was shown up a couple of flights of stairs to my room.

This adjoined a balcony, enclosed by Persian blinds, by means of which the sun could be completely shut out. The room was high and airy and

was furnished in bamboo and cane throughout, with a bath in connection. The bed had an elastic cane bottom and was provided with a screen of white lawn to keep the mosquitoes out.

At half past seven the gong sounded. On ship-board I had learned what that signal meant. I was ready in a moment, having no change of clothes, and at the next signal I went down to the sitting-room.

Frank introduced me to his mother, a middle-aged lady, whose features bore evidence of a long term of residence in the hot climate of India. In her face was a suggestion of weariness, induced by indifference and leisure rather than exertion. This disappeared, however, when she greeted me as the rescuer of her son, and she afterwards showed me much kindness.

Her daughter Amy was of my age, about nineteen years. Like all children of European parents living in India, she had been educated in Europe, and had returned to Calcutta just a year before. She was a pretty girl, tall and slender, with fair complexion and blonde hair. Her laughter was silvery, and from the first she treated me with the arch frankness of a sister.

Over the tables there were punkas, such as I

had seen in the dining room on the steamer, that is, large fans, consisting of canvas stretched on frames, suspended by rods from the ceiling and set in motion by the servants outside by means of chords running in pulleys.

These punkas, found everywhere in India, create an air current strong enough to disarrange one's hair. The coolness was delightful, the dining hall brightly lit up, the meal delicious, and all would have been highly enjoyable, except for a great swarm of pesky green flies, which buzzed incessantly about our ears and plates.

The table fairly groaned under the weight of Indian fancy courses, among which the luscious tropical fruits were most tempting to me, but at Mrs. Clermont's warning I at first indulged my appetite very sparingly.

When we retired for the night, Frank asked me to go riding with him the next morning.

"That is," he added, "provided you care to rise before the sun."

Horseback riding was one of my favorite sports at Lindesvik, where I was often permitted to ride out with the young barons, at a respectful distance behind them, of course. Now there was to be an end to this classification halfway between companion

and servant, and I was to see a glimpse of India side by side with a friend.

The September night was most delightful, and no warmer than an average summer night in the North. Fully rested, I stood on the front portico at four in the morning, waiting for Frank, while watching the gaily appareled stableboys leading forth the blooded Arab steeds. Frank now came out, and bestriding the noble animals, we rode down to the river.

From the temples marble stairs led down to the water's edge. Up and down the stairways at this early hour passed multitudes of Hindoos, men and women, come to cleanse themselves from sin by bathing in the sacred river. Some were just going into the water, while others, who had finished their bath, were returning to the temple.

I thought with sadness of all these people, who knew not the only true and living God, and yet I could not but admire their peculiar worship, for they, especially the women, entered into the rites with a solemn devotion and selfdenial that would put many so-called Christians to shame.

The Hindoo women of high caste are generally veiled, the Mohammedan, always. In consequence, we saw very little of their faces, but judging from

their figures, they were mostly of fine appearance.

On the river bank they skillfully and without exposure changed their wet robes for dry garments. Even the veils were exchanged so quickly and dexterously that their faces were not uncovered for an instant.

The men, upon emerging from the water, were met by barbers, who attended to their hair, mouth and ears, after which men with brushes and paints marked their faces with the sign of each man's particular god or goddess.

From the bathing beach we rode on to another part of the riverbank, the place where the dead are cremated. Here we saw living beings tied securely to bamboo poles, lying very near the water's edge. These pitiable creatures, sick and dying, were in many cases, according to Frank's story, wealthy men and women, whose heirs would have them brought down here so that, if they showed signs of improving health, life might readily be choked out with sacred mud from the river. Then the bodies are burned, but not completely reduced to ashes, there being a scarcity of fuel for all the thousands who die daily in this hotbed of cholera and fevers. The half-charred corpses are thrown into the river, on whose banks crocodiles and buzzards feast on

the remains. The buzzards, here called adjutants, are seen in multitudes on the roofs of the temples along the river and in all the streets, where these large birds walk around like domestic fowls, undisturbed by processions, passing vehicles and all the noise and hubbub of the thoroughfares.

We took a cross cut through the black city, which fairly swarms with people. Here live rich baboos in sumptuous houses with brightly painted porches and balconies, alongside of paupers in adobe huts and squalid bamboo shelters.

The most remarkable marble temples are here to be seen, and from the pagodas and minarets there glittered in the rising sun rubies, turquoises and other precious stones, while the marble walls were bright with curious mosaics of many-colored stones, inlaid in the form of flowers, leaves and tendrils, works of art which often excited my admiration.

Riding, driving or carried in palankeens, all were bound for home. The dusky coolies in their scant attire, consisting of a piece of cotton cloth about the hips, were perspiring copiously as they trotted along with their covered boxes, in which sat some highborn native lady, who thus caged had been taking her morning promenade. Close behind comes another similar box, preceded by attendants

in light-colored clothes and carrying silver staffs. This box was open at the sides, revealing a dark man in white attire, reclining on a mattress.

"That's a wealthy banker," Frank informed me.

"But what's this?"

Right in the sun hideous looking men stood here and there along the way, knotted and twisted into awkward and most uncomfortable attitudes.

"They are fakirs," said he, "a kind of saints, who by self-torture bring themselves into a trance."

We urged our horses so as to get quickly through the black city with its anything but agreeable atmosphere. Soon we found ourselves beneath the shade of the great trees whose dense foliage shelters a large part of the English city, or the white quarters.

It was now after six o'clock and the heat of day was growing oppressive. We returned home and retired to our rooms, where not a ray of sunlight penetrated, and reclined on elastic couches for a short nap, fanned by the punkas, which were constantly in motion.

After a couple of hours of rest and the morning bath we went down to breakfast. The elder

Mr. Clermont then ordered his palankeen and was carried to the office.

Frank and I were carried to various shops, where I was outwardly transformed into a perfect Hindoo gentleman.

I was to wait a few days before taking up my duties at the office, so we returned home after making our purchases. We lounged around in airy and comfortable cane chairs, with our feet on the rests provided for the purpose. In this position I gained at my leisure further knowledge of the new country from my talkative and well-informed companion.

Frank spoke eagerly of the tiger hunts up in the mountain passes.

"And monkeys," said he, "why, the woods are full of them, to say nothing of pretty birds."

I asked about the many poisonous reptiles, but was at once put at ease on that point. He said there were only five or six dangerous varieties of serpents, and these seldom found their way into the city.

"But scorpions you have to look out for," he added. "Turn your shoes upside down and shake them every morning before putting them on. And as for insects—just look here!"

As he removed some papers lying on a table,

bugs, roaches and all sorts of creeping things came to view. Among them were the dreaded white ants, which destroy woodwork, furniture and clothing.

Miss Amy came in to us, attired in gauzy white. In the darkened room she seemed like a spirit, but her sweet chatter and merry laughter proved her a very real and charming creature.

She suggested that we lazybones come into the salon or reception room, where I might get some idea of social life in India.

When the footsteps of the palankeen carriers next resounded in the corridors and a gentleman caller was announced, we went in.

The room was so dark that I could not see the hostess; but her soft voice, inquiring the name of the visitor, betrayed her presence.

The Hindoo servant pronounced the name as best he could, leaving out vowels and making up for it by adding consonants.

The visitor was cordially received and asked to be seated in an oriental chair. Next to him Amy took her place, her fingers busy crocheting with a needle of carved ivory.

The conversation lagged at first, until Frank began telling of our adventure at sea, when all grew very much interested. Afterwards I learned that

such stories of adventure were so highly relished in India that they are passed along from palace to bungalow, until the first narrator cannot recognize them. Those who are not compelled to work, and especially the women of the wealthy classes, have a dreary time of it and are given to melancholia and spleen. They have not the strength to read, paint or play music while in such a frame of mind, and often other maladies result from the oppressiveness of the climate.

When I heard this, I could understand why the guest, upon leaving, confessed to having been very much relaxed by his visit, evidently by listening to our tragic story of the shipwreck.

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## VIII.

### A DEMON.

**W**HEN on the next day I entered the reception room, attired in the customary dress of the country, including a white jacket and a red sash around the waist, in lieu of a vest, I found two strangers there.

One was a lady, still beautiful, though no longer young. Her name was Zuleima Norton.

Her appearance at once betrayed her Hindoo origin. Her complexion was brown, the eyebrows black and arched, the eyes very dark, with an occasional flash as of lightning in the night. Again, there would be a sharp and treacherous glitter in her look, as in the eyes of serpents whose sting means death.

In her black hair, which was tastefully arranged, jeweled pins glittered. Her figure was of charming

proportions, and she knew the art of dressing well. Gentle and refined in manner, she was a welcome and frequent guest in the Clermont home.

This was only natural, for her son, Mr. Richard Norton, was Mr. Clermont's right hand man and the head of his great business office. Knowing that I would soon have him to deal with, I at once sought to form an opinion of him.

He was a young man of fine figure, not very tall, his face and small, well-shaped hands indicating his Hindoo blood, but his hair and eyes were of a lighter hue than those of his mother. By degrees I discovered that he had inherited the snake-like and revengeful nature of his mother.

The dinner was splendid. In the course of the evening Mr. Norton gave me an insight into the commercial life of India. Being altogether ignorant of business conditions in Europe, I could make no comparisons, but when I took my place in the office the next morning I could understand that there must be an enormous difference.

Like most buildings in India, the Clermont offices were surrounded by broad piazzas, shutting out the sun. In every room punkas were kept in motion, and turbaned Hindoos, dressed in white,

swarmed everywhere. In the warehouses these and the half-naked coolies made a motley mass.

In the outer offices the Hindoo bookkeepers were at work. Sitting on their heels, with their legs folded under them, they looked like so many strange birds. On the floor beside them were bills and money-bags, account books and writing materials. In writing they steadied the book against one knee. The account books, therefore, were made quite small. In the banking houses there were similar scenes. One had to pick one's way among stacks of gold.

The inner office was arranged in European fashion, yet with reference to climatic conditions. Frank's chair was usually vacant, and I soon gathered that it was at the instance of Richard Norton the parents had sent him to sea and allowed him to drift aimlessly about.

That Norton's influence with the parents had been impaired by the events of the latest voyage I was convinced while inadvertently overhearing a conversation between the two men. It was carried on in an adjoining office room, and I recall very distinctly what was said. How it started I do not know, but these were the words of Mr. Norton:

“— — That might do very well for me, who

owe so much to your parents and who depend on my own efforts for getting on in the world, but as for you, my friend, it is of first importance that you regain your health, which must have suffered in the shipwreck. It tells on you. Your face is paler and your eyes look very much weaker, and that is not to be wondered at. This climate is not for you Englishmen. You must try to get away again. And however much I dislike to have you leave us, I realize that when your well-being or perhaps your life is at stake, I ought to sacrifice my own interests."

"I thank you," said Frank, "but I feel very well. It is true, the climate is trying, and therefore it is well to get away from here now and then, but after Carl Lennartson came, I have a very pleasant time. He is a fine boy, alert and openhearted. I wish I had his qualities."

"Yes; I understand." Norton changed his tone. "It is to his interest to make himself agreeable to your family. The other day I heard him tell his life story to your sister Amy, and it was very romantic, indeed. But that about the ruby ring I could not swallow."

"How you speak!" Frank exclaimed. "I have also heard the whole story, and I cannot believe

that a young man with his honest eye and frank nature would lie about it. What puzzles me, though, is that he has been here several months without getting one letter from home. I know he has written several times."

"Yes, that's the trouble. If his story were true, his letters certainly would be answered. His mother is living, and he may have had word from her, but probably he does not wish to reveal the contents of her letters. I have a mind to find out."

With these words Norton left, and I again turned to my bookkeeping, a work which continued to absorb all my powers, unaccustomed as I was both to business in general and to the English commercial terms. I had no time to reflect on what the two men had said until the lunch hour came, but as I reclined in my palanquin on my way home I had to admit that Mr. Norton was right.

I had written several times to my mother, but received no reply. This gave me much worry and I had brought my troubles to God in prayer. I was not only alarmed about my mother, but the lack of communication with Miss Clara also gave me great concern. The presence of Miss Amy refreshed her image in my mind daily, and I was

often seized with an inexpressible longing for my loved ones at home.

When no letters came, I decided to follow the baron's advice not to write until I had earned something and thereby shown what I could do. After that I would not write, but go home directly. Would my mother live to see that day? I felt almost sure she would and was happy in the thought of supporting her in her old age.

My fancy was building a new cottage for her while I was being carried by the coolies along fine avenues of palms, tamarinds and mango trees. The northern pines and forest flowers were almost forgotten in the intoxicating fragrance of the tropical flora.

And then the ring. Here one's thoughts easily ran to precious stones. As soon as I had saved up as much as needed I would buy rubies and diamonds the like of which my friends in Sweden had never seen.

With these pleasant thoughts I returned daily to my task, but when the heat grew too oppressive and drops of perspiration soiled the books before me, I envied Frank, who sat smoking in a comfortable reclining chair on the cool piazza.

We were together as much as my duties would

permit, and from him I learnt all about affairs outside of the business office. One day I asked him about Mrs. Norton, and he told me her story, as follows:

“During one of the raids made against the Se-poys some thirty years ago, Captain Norton and his brave little troop one day upon their return from the frontier found themselves in a dense tropical forest. You haven’t yet seen such a one, but you will some day. Well, you have seen banyan trees, so common here in Bengal. Imagine a whole jungle of them, with their aerial roots forming impenetrable barriers. Captain Norton and his men had got into such a forest and were riding hither and thither to find their way out, meanwhile approaching the Ganges.

“In the shadow of bamboos, great, dense mangoes and tamarinds, all draped with luxuriant drooping vines and climbers, were little shrines, mausoleums erected to the suttī . . .”

“What are they?”

“So they call the widows who mount the funeral pyres of their dead husbands.”

After a moment’s silence Frank proceeded:

“Finding a better road there, and more shade,

the troopers followed the river not far from the bank.

“At a distance they heard music, which grew louder and louder. There was a clang of cymbals, a blast of horns and a beating of tomtoms. The horsemen reined in their horses for a moment, and a young officer called Captain Norton’s attention to a pillar of smoke rising high in the calm, clear air.

“The captain and his men gave their horses the spurs and soon reached a clearing in the woods, where a multitude of Hindoo men and women were assembled around a burning pyre. Through the flames could be seen a charred object—the corpse.

“A young and beautiful woman, dressed in a mantle of snowy whiteness, was walking slowly around the pyre. It was apparently the surviving widow, who, after encircling the pile three times, mumbling prayers, was to enter the flames. She looked cheerful, and the music was by no means needed for the purpose of drowning her cries of agony. The object was merely to prevent the bystanders from hearing her last words.

“She was about to set her foot on the nearest fagot. That instant Captain Norton reached her side.

“‘Who dares to break the law which prohibits

sutti?' he shouted, swinging his sword over the heads of the natives. Seeing the troop approaching with drawn sabres, the Hindoos fled pell mell and the music ceased. The young widow fell in a swoon. The captain ordered her brought to the nearest English station and tenderly cared for. He himself remained on the spot till the pyre was burnt out, when he had the half-consumed body thrown into the river, according to custom.

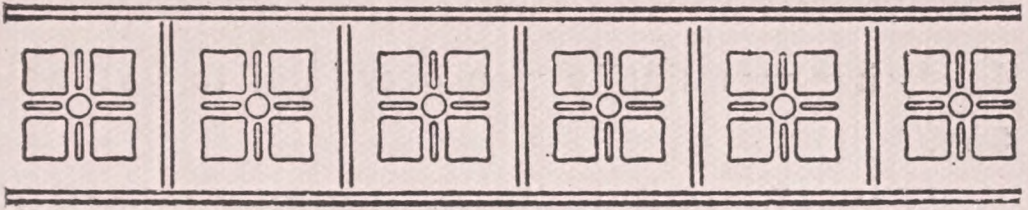
The beautiful widow, whose name was Zuleima, was taken sick on the way to the station, but recovered under proper care. By accepting British protection she had lost her high caste, that of the Brahmins, and dared not return to her own people, but remained with an English family, where she embraced Christianity, learnt the English language and adopted English customs. At the close of the campaign she became the wife of her rescuer, Captain Norton."

Having seen a little of Hindoo customs but not knowing much of the characteristics of the people, I wondered how she had liked her position as the wife of an Englishman. That Frank could not say, only that her husband had been killed in the battle of Sobraon and that among his papers was a sealed letter, addressed to Mr. Clermont, wherein Captain

Norton requested him, his only relative, to care for his wife and child.

“My father,” continued Frank, “fulfilled the request and invited Mrs. Norton and her son to come to Calcutta. When Richard showed no desire to join the army, my father brought him up for a business career, and now, as you know, he is manager of the office.”

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## IX.

### THE TIGER HUNT.

ONE day in January, about a year after my coming to Calcutta, Frank came to the office and told me that Rajah Jamsetjee Framjee, a business friend of his father's, had sent an invitation to take part in a great tiger hunt up in the mountains.

Mr. Clermont was not in favor of the affair, but Mr. Norton had insisted that we both should go.

"Just think of it," said Frank, "he spoke for you too, although he never seems to think he gets enough work out of you."

"Oh, really!" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes," continued Frank, "he said there was little to do at present, and, besides, it would be good for the young men to see a bit of the country."

My father was finally won over, and tomorrow we start."

When I stood ready to mount my horse the next morning, Norton came to me and said:

"I don't know how good a shot you are, Mr. Lennartson. If you are not a fair marksman, this might turn out badly enough, but that you may be well prepared, I will put a trusty weapon in your hands. Here, take my own rifle! That you may depend upon."

Again pleasantly surprised at his kindness toward me, I thanked him heartily, and we started on our way.

We had a pleasant trip to the point in the mountains where the hunting party was to meet. Several chiefs of high rank were to take part. This put me in a position to see much oriental finery. Many of the party carried silvermounted pistols in their belts, and most of them were provided with double-barreled English rifles. The horses were richly caparisoned, the softly cushioned saddles were highly ornamented and the saddle-blankets were of blue and crimson felt or velvet, embroidered in gold and silver.

My spirits were never lighter than on the morning of the hunt, when, freed from an arduous task

little suited to my inclinations, I found myself out in the open, one of a gay party in search of pleasure and adventure.

The party started out before daylight. In the gray dawn we could see the fog covering the valleys below. Then the eastern sky began to redden, reflecting its rosy glow on the scattering mists. The mountains above were wrapped in clouds, and the trees of the forest, tall palms, dense teaks and tamarinds covered with bright-colored parasites, were still one dark mass. The sun came with a suddenness unknown to northerners. In a few moments the sky was all afire, the cloud-caps were torn from the mountain-peaks and in the valleys the fog gave way to the warm waves of air, heavy with perfume. The heavy dewdrops on leaves and flowers were turned to sparkling diamonds before being absorbed by the sun's rays and the dewy beads caught in the webs of the spider shone like opals.

No song-birds greeted the coming of day, but humming-birds fluttered about and parrots in many colors and multitudes of monkeys enlivened the woodlands, while the bronze-colored turtledoves cooed unseen.

Frank was spying eagerly among the underbrush for the striped prey, and every man among

us kept a sharp lookout for the king of the jungle. We saw wild peacocks parading proudly on the green, but hardly expected to encounter any tiger until we reached some stream or lake.

Now the glitter of water showed among the trees in the distance. It was a small lake surrounded by tall trees and a dense canebrake of bamboo—a favorite haunt of the royal Bengal.

The rajah gave orders to his trumpeters to start the music. The other musicians joined in, and with the blare of a full Hindoo band and an occasional pistol shot we rode down toward the water. Our horses showed signs of excitement and fright as we approached the lake. They were therefore left in the hands of the attendants, while the rest of our party entered the jungle afoot, still keeping up the din of music and pistol shots.

Rockets were fired into the air and firecrackers and squibs thrown into the brakes and tall grass. Our hearts beat violently as we look for the prey to spring from hiding. The Hindoo gentlemen advised us to remain calm. A line was formed along the shore, and none too early, for just then a tiger, frightened by a squib that had set the grass on fire, started from his lair and rushed out into the open.

Frank leveled his rifle and fired. The wounded

beast rushed at him. Being the nearest man, I pointed my weapon straight at the heart of the tiger and pulled the trigger. The rifle missed fire, and in an instant the animal sprang upon me and knocked me to the ground.

With one hand I tried to protect the back of my neck, where I felt sharp claws entering the flesh. Just then I heard a shot, which laid the brute low.

As I raised myself, I felt the blood stream from the wound. With his handkerchief Frank stopped the flow until the attending physician of the rajah applied proper bandages.

So great had been the loss of blood that I was disabled from taking further part in the hunt. I was therefore brought back to where the horses and part of the attendants were left. There I was placed in a tent and well cared for, but I soon grew so feverish I knew not where I was. I heard the music in the distance, saw the liveried and turbaned Hindoo servants moving about and could distinguish the chatter of monkeys and the call of the peacocks outside.

Just before sunset the hunters returned laden with the day's booty. Frank had shot a fine speci-

men of the royal Bengal, but his concern for me did much to spoil his pleasure.

A return to Calcutta in my present condition being out of the question, the rajah invited our party to remain as his guests until I should get better.

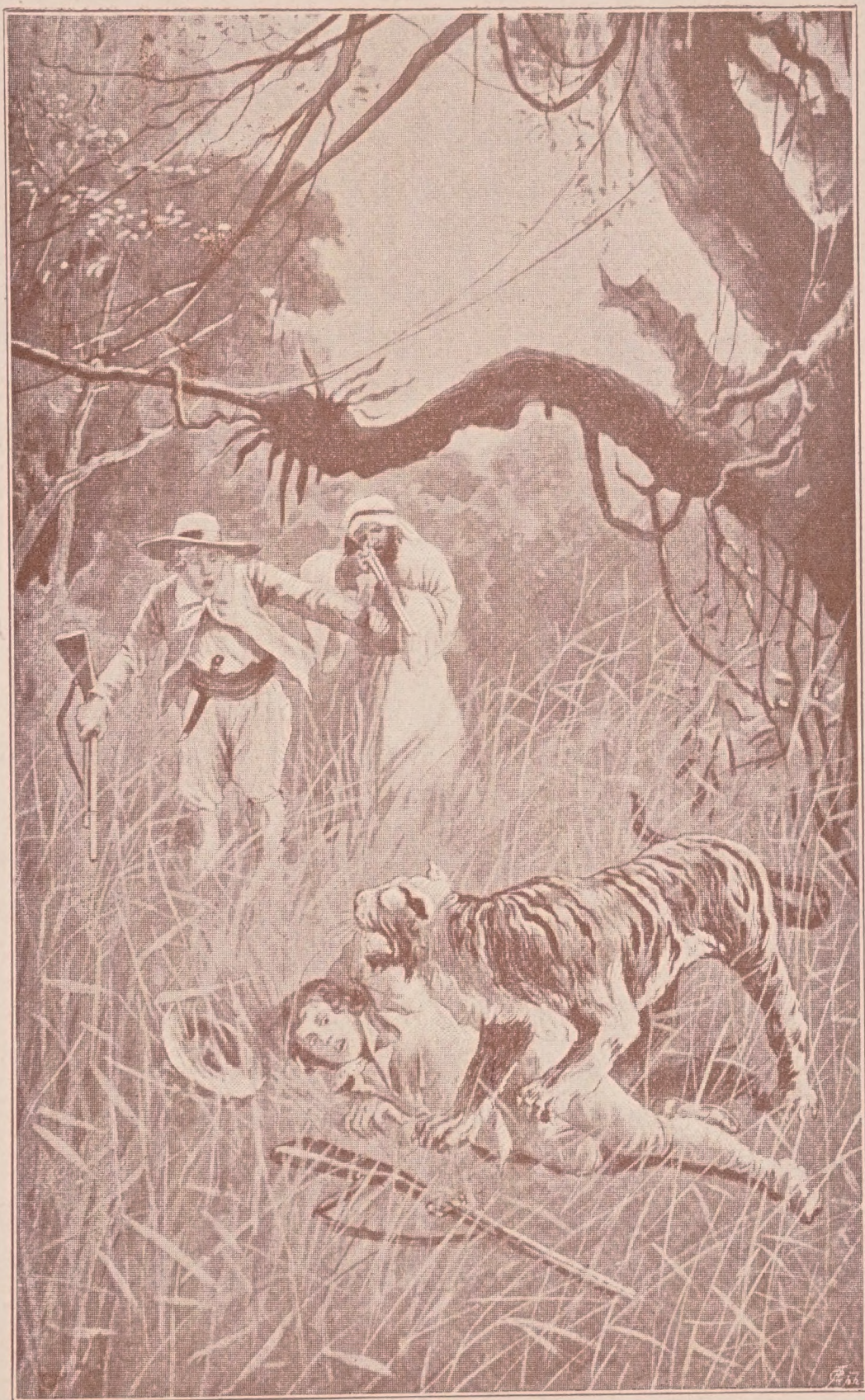
It was difficult for me to mount my horse that evening, but the cool night air, soothing as the breeze of springtime in my native land, refreshed me wonderfully.

The forest was in places very dense, and flowering shrubs and vines sometimes threatened to bar further progress, but we pushed on through the darkness, which was lit up by brilliant fire-flies where the dark foliage shut out the moonlight.

At last the marble palace of the rajah gleamed among the trees. We rode into a splendid courtyard, where we were surrounded by half a score of dusky attendants, part of the life guard of the rajah.

They carried me up to a sleeping room furnished with all the luxury that an English gentleman might desire, and placed me on a cool and comfortable bed.

I spent a bad night, however, with a new attack of fever. It kept me for days hovering between life and death. Frank never for a moment left my



A stroke of his paw threw me to the ground.



bedside. Not until the fever left me and I required perfect quiet would he consent to go out of the sickroom.

He was then shown about the palace by our host, the rajah. It was a large building with a double tier of colonnades running all around it, and floors and staircases of polished white marble. As soon as I was strong enough to listen, he gave me a vivid description of all that he had seen, many details of which I still remember. The various rooms were decorated and furnished in European style. There were fine tables, chandeliers, pianos and large mirrors. There were great hall clocks and table clocks with art groups in bronze and a clock with little honey-birds that fluttered out and in when it struck the hours. On the walls were costly paintings; some Oriental, executed with all the minuteness of the artists of the East; but there were also several works by the Italian masters, including a picture of the Madonna surrounded by angels.

Books were not lacking. Large cases were filled with works in expensive bindings and on the library tables were found the finest editions of such writers as Scott, Byron and even Burns.

The rajah had shown displeasure when Frank had failed to fall into raptures over all these Euro-

pean luxuries. However, when he was brought into a hall furnished in the finest Oriental style, he had expressed his astonishment to the great satisfaction of his host. He had admired the costly rugs of exquisite fabrics, the luxurious couches and cushions scattered about, and had spoken in high praise of the princely taste of the rajah and his family, as here shown.

In the palace garden there was a zoo, containing many wild animals in captivity. They were not caged, but moved about at will in large enclosures.

With great pleasure Frank had watched the children at play in the garden. There were several pretty little girls, constantly attended by turbaned male guardians, for no native woman is permitted to show herself. The rooms, or zenanas, of the children were in a separate part of the palace.

As soon as I was able to be about, we returned to Calcutta. The trip was trying and wearisome to me, while Frank was jubilant over his success and proud of the prey he brought back with him to the city.

At my request we went straight to the office, where we were met by the elder Clermont and Mr. Norton. The former gave his son a fond embrace,

then he turned to me with clouded brow. My bandaged arm and pale face disarmed him, and instead of giving me the lecture I expected, he exclaimed in astonishment:

“What?—An accident!”

Before I could reply, Frank had vividly described our adventure, whereupon Mr. Clermont resumed his kind and fatherly tone.

“I always said to Norton”—he urged me to take his own comfortable chair—“that Mr. Lennartson would show good cause for remaining away so long, and I am glad I was right.”

“I thank you, Mr. Clermont,” said I, respectfully. “Now that I think of it, Mr. Norton,” said I, turning to him, “I wish to return your rifle.”

Frank sent an attendant for it.

“As you have heard,” I continued, “it came near making an end of us. It was only by the help of God that we were saved. Will you kindly examine the gun yourself.”

Turning quite pale, he took the weapon and looked at it carefully.

“That is peculiar,” he said finally, looking me straight in the eye, “the gun was perfect when I gave it to you, and now it is already out of order.

Why, it was entirely new, I hadn't even had time to test it."

"How then, could you know it was perfect?" interposed Frank.

"So the gunsmith (he gave his name) assured me, so it must have got out of order on the way."

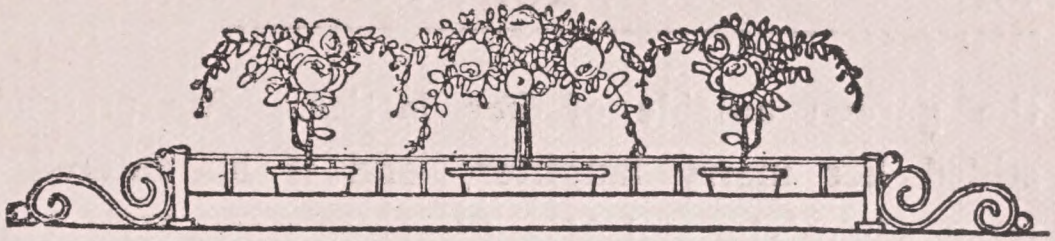
"Impossible! For it was in the care of my attendant, and was never once taken from its case. Isn't that so, William?"

"Yes, sir, I can testify to that."

Mr. Clermont looked at his watch. The dinner hour was not yet at hand, nevertheless he ordered his palankeen. I was given a place in it, while Frank rode horseback, and thus we proceeded home. Frank was received with cheers, and after he had repeated the story of our adventure, I received the kindest attention.

It was a delightful evening that we passed on the airy piazza, surrounded by orchids in bloom. All seemed happy but Norton, who appeared to be planning revenge, but fortunately for him the moonlight did not fall on his gloomy features to betray his sullen expression. Where he sat, his face was in the shadow and could not be studied by any one but me.

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## X.

### THE CARAVAN.

**T**IME passed, day by day, month by month, until I could count my residence in India by years. I was now experienced in the business, and several deals in which I was consulted had turned out well.

Norton and his mother had grown more friendly toward me, possibly on account of his designs on Miss Clermont's heart. Mrs. Norton favored the match, and did everything to bring it about, but all her labor was lost.

Miss Amy always preferred the company of her brother and myself to that of Norton. She often walked with us, but never with him, and preferred the books we gave her to those imported by him at quite an expense. If he brought her a bouquet of the rarest flowers, they would soon lie scattered in

the garden outside of her lattice. His presence stilled her merry laughter, and if he entered a room where she and Mrs. Clermont were, Miss Amy would shrink back behind her mother as if in fear of the man. In a word, she very plainly showed dislike to him, while treating me as a brother. I noticed how this irritated him and how hard it was for him to retain the mask of friendship he had adopted toward me.

Mrs. Norton called oftener than ever, and I could see how she used every art to wheedle herself into the good graces of Mrs. Clermont. Apparently she succeeded, for relations between the members of the family became strained, and with sorrow I often noticed traces of tears about Miss Amy's eyes.

One day, while the rest of the family were enjoying their siesta, Mr. Clermont and I walked back and forth along the shady colonnade, engrossed in conversation about business matters. He suddenly stopped and said:

"I have a plan which I have often thought of carrying out, that is, to send a caravan with rare articles of commerce up to Gaurisankar and through that district. I am sure the goods would find a ready sale, or what do you say?"

I agreed, provided the right person was placed in charge.

"Of course," said he; "we must send a man who can be fully trusted. He must have courage and good sense, for it is a risky venture. The road is unsafe, the people up there are fretting and I am told organized bands of robbers are at large. The caravan must therefore be large and well-armed, and led by a brave man. I have asked Mr. Norton to take charge, but he suggested you in his stead."

"Did he?"

Mr. Clermont proceeded:

"Yes, he says his health is not the best and he could not stand the strain, while you are hale and strong and used to hardships from boyhood. He thinks you the right man for the task."

I was silent.

"You do not answer, Mr. Lennartson?"

I signified my readiness to obey his commands.

"This, my dear Mr. Lennartson, is not a question of obeying orders." He spoke warmly and earnestly. "This undertaking can be carried out only by a man who has the will and the courage to do it."

"Such a trip as you propose would interest me

very much," said I. "Since you, Mr. Clermont, are kind enough to trust me, I will try. And I assure you I will do all in my power to merit your good opinion of me."

"Very well, my boy; I only wish Frank had your ability to work and took the same interest in the work. This enterprise, if it turns out well, will be partly to your own advantage, for you shall have a share in the profits, and furthermore, upon your safe return your salary will be increased. I have thought of this for a long time, but Mr. Norton."

"You are very kind, Mr. Clermont," I interrupted, "but . . ." I hesitated, doubtful whether to speak my full mind.

"Don't be afraid of speaking out," he urged, and I took courage to say:

"Mr. Clermont, do not misunderstand me when I say that Mr. Norton is not a man to be fully relied upon."

"Not a word about that," he flared up. "Not one word, sir, if you wish to have my confidence and good will."

In the absence of proofs, I could say nothing more. And evidence against so shrewd a man as Mr. Norton was not easy to get. It astonished me to find that Mr. and Mrs. Clermont, intelligent and

clearsighted as they were in all other matters, allowed themselves to be led blindly by a scoundrel like Norton. None of the office employees or attendants could tolerate him, and I well knew that he would have got me out of the house, like many faithful employees before me, but for the fact that I had twice saved Frank Clermont's life.

Perceiving that I could do nothing to expose the man, I left the matter to God, confiding in His power to undo the plottings of my enemy, and busied myself with preparations for the journey.

These were on a large scale. A vast amount of costly goods had to be carried by boat up the Hooghly river, then on the backs of camels and elephants far into the mountain regions. A number of business men who had commercial interests in those parts, together with many tourists who traveled for their pleasure or for scientific purposes, joined our caravan.

It thus grew so large and was so well equipped that there was little danger of attack. We had an escort of brownish-yellow Hindoos who wore white turbans and tucked sashes. Besides, we had interpreters, salesmen, carriers and other attendants.

On the morning of the start, the whole Clermont family was down to see us off, and all gave me

their best advice and wished us a happy journey. I shook hands cordially with all in turn, but no one pressed my hand with such eagerness and ostentation as did Mrs. Norton. But I thought I saw in her eyes that which belied the smile on her lips and her profuse well-wishes. She stood near Miss Amy, who had Richard Norton close by her side.

"With such a caravan and with so many people to guard it, only a coward would fear an attack," he remarked with scorn. "In fact, I would not know what to do with such a crowd."

"Won't you be so kind as to lend me your gun once more?" I demanded in an ironical tone. "Perhaps it would serve me better this time."

He gave me a withering glance. There was a gleam of infernal hatred in his eye, but before he could reply, Frank drew me aside.

"I am ashamed," said he, "to stand here like an idler and see you go. My place should have been at the head of this expedition, but you have earned my father's confidence better than I. Some day I hope to follow your example, to go to work and make a man of myself. Goodbye, and remember, if ill luck befalls you, it will break my heart."

"Thank you, Frank, thank you!" As we clasped one another's hands with a brotherly grip,

I expressed the sincere hope that he would keep his word and man himself for the serious duties of life—and a splendid man he would be. “But keep an eye on Norton,” I added, warningly.

“Tut, tut, have a care! On that point we shall never agree, and what is worse, Carl, I fear you have already poisoned the mind of my little sister, for as to Norton she will not take reason, though he is as fine a fellow as I have ever known.”

“Time will show who is right, you or I. I have thought it my duty to warn you. Meanwhile, be kind and fair to your sister, and comfort her—if troubles come.”

“I don’t know what you mean? I had hoped we would part as the best of friends, and now you spring this disagreeable subject on me the last thing.”

“Yes—the best of friends, now and always,” said I giving his hand a last hearty shake.

Miss Amy came over to us. I counseled her to trust in God, and He would be an ever present help.

She thanked me with tears in her eyes. I stepped on board, the gangplank was pulled in, and the boat started.

The merchandise was loaded on barges towed

by cables in the wake of the steamer. The goods were guarded by the armed escort. Having reached the point where the Hooghly river joins the Ganges, we loaded the merchandise on camels while the party mounted elephants. Climbing a short ladder one entered a small coupé on the back of the animal, and rode as in the cabin of a tossing launch. The "pilot" sat perched back of the animal's head. A number of our party preferred, however, to travel in palankeens, carried by coolies.

The route was a picturesque one, passing through dense forests interwoven with tropical climbers of every variety. These lianas twined themselves curiously around the trunks of the trees and some hung straight as canes from the upper limbs. Often the tree had been choked to death by the parasites, which still thrived luxuriantly, forming thick jungles in the air. Tigers and wild elephants roamed these forests and found refuge in the inaccessible fastnesses of the mountain gorges and valleys.

We used to start our day's journey while the mists still hung about the peaks of the Himalayas. I was charmed with the grandeur of the sunrise as it gilded the mountain summits, dispersed the fog and called forth again the splendor and fragrance of the bright-blossomed rhododendrons.

Fortunately, we all got safe and sound through the unhealthy region that separates upper and lower India, a region so perilous to life that a line of forts along the British border could afford no better protection against Mongolian inroads.

The higher up we traveled, the finer the climate. The nights were cool as a mild midwinter-day in Sweden. The mornings were like a spring day, but at midday the sun was scorching.

The scenery changed as we drew near to Nepal. At last, after many a weary day's travel, we reached Katmandoo, the capital city, where I was well received by the sovereign, who was an ally of the British.

The Nepalese are a mixed race. They are ugly, but strong and industrious. The men wore white jackets and pantaloons and small white caps on close-cropped heads, and a ferocious dagger, dangling in a black scabbard, completed each man's accoutrement.

The women wore conspicuous nose ornaments. Besides a gold pin, or rather spike, stuck through one wing of the nose, designating their married state, they wore a gold plate, about two inches square and set with turquoises, hanging from the nose so as to cover the mouth. Their children they

carry in little cradles on their backs. Often an entire family might be seen squatting around their place of business, which consisted of a piece of carpet spread on the ground, on which their modest wares were displayed.

The manners and customs of the people on this frontier of Thibet are greatly influenced by the Chinese. Much oriental luxury is in evidence, and our merchandise was in great demand.

In the palace of the ruler there was the largest and costliest collection of precious stones that I have ever seen. In Katmandoo I purchased a splendid ruby and a number of small diamonds. I placed them in the little purse given me by Miss Clara, and as I looked on the embroidered words, "Truth Will Prevail," I thought with grateful heart of God's providence in guiding me far into Asia, to the base of the highest mountains in the world, in order that I might some day be able to clear myself of a false charge.

That evening before retiring I read, as usual, a few passages from my little volume of the New Testament. Between the sacred leaves I preserved the faded letters of my mother. In far away Nepal I read them through once more and my fancy fled from amid the glories of the Orient back to the low-thatched cottage of my birth.



## XI.

### THE STORM.

HAVING disposed of our goods with fair profit, we started on our way homeward. Our beasts of burden were now heavily laden with costly silks and satins, shawls, muslins, gold and silverware, precious gems and quantities of other merchandise, besides a large sum of money in gold and silver coin.

The tourists of our party had all left us. Only one, a German scientist, who had pursued botanical studies in these parts, accompanied us on our way home. He was about my age, and having once visited Sweden, he and I had many things to talk about.

“As soon as I can, I am going back home”—that was my standing resolution, and now that I repeated it in talking with him, it brought back an

overwhelming longing for but a breath of air from Swedish fields and pinewoods, for the day was hot and parching, and not a leaf stirred in the great forest through which we were passing.

All of a sudden a breeze sprang up. "Fine!" says I, leaning my head out of the palankeen to cool my brow. Then I discovered black, threatening clouds drawing rapidly near.

The wind subsided and for a while the heat felt doubly oppressive, until the hurricane broke. The tornado crashed through the forest, trees centuries old snapped or were torn up by the roots, sand, gravel and small boulders were whirled into the air, leaves, flowers and vegetation swept away. A few moments of this, and the black cloud opened up with its batteries of lightning and thunder. With the howl of the winds mingled the agonized wail of beasts and birds, and the panicky trumpeting of our elephants.

Guided by the echoes of the thunder, we found some cliffs near by, where our caravan sought shelter in caves and overhanging rocks. The rain came down in torrents, and I was glad to have the goods under cover, or everything would have been drenched through and through.

I myself was soaked to the skin. The rain was

mixed with hail, and a sudden fall of temperature set us shivering with cold. But the sky soon cleared. We now discovered that the storm had dispersed the caravan, part of which had disappeared. We remained where we were for a short rest, and, as I was unwilling to leave the animals, left it to the others to look us up.

As soon as the storm had fully subsided, we proceeded on our way, wet, cold and downcast. We soon struck a wide road running through the thick of the forest, and there found a couple of our missing animals, but the palankeens of our missing comrades were nowhere to be seen.

A shot was heard. I supposed it was our friends signaling their return, but the next instant there was a second and a third report. A man fell and one of our elephants was wounded. At full speed the animal tore through brush and brake, trumpeting wildly as he ran. The ropes which held his pack in place gave way and several attendants hastened to save the scattered valuables.

When I tried to get out of my palankeen, I found myself surrounded by dark-skinned, dusky-eyed bandits.

My companion, the young German botanist,

was instantly dragged from his palankeen, killed and trampled under foot.

It was my turn next.

"Down with the Englishman!" shouted one of the barbarian outlaws, flourishing his sabre over my head.

"He is no Englishman," retorted my faithful Hindoo servant, who a moment before had pulled off my hat and clapped his own turban on my head.

"Let him live, then!" roared another voice.

I was dragged from my palankeen, blindfolded and had my hands tied behind my back, whereupon I was knocked down with a force that stunned me. How long I lay unconscious I cannot say. Partly regaining my senses, I opened my eyes and felt the sensation of being hurled through space, while myriads of stars danced before me. Then I closed my eyes and lapsed again into unconsciousness.

When I woke up, the cloth had been removed from my eyes, my hands were free, and I found myself lying on a rug in an underground cavern, whose dark passages were lit up at intervals by flaming torches. When I tried to rise, I felt rack-ing pains throughout my body, while my brain threatened to burst the skull and my temples pounded

violently. The blood coursed through my veins like liquid fire and I realized my situation as in a feverish dream.

By the light of the torches I discovered dark figures, whose hideous visages almost frightened me. Others came dragging or carrying bales and packs which I thought I recognized as our property. As I made another attempt to rise, one of the men came over and examined me in the glare of a torch, muttering harsh sounds in Hindostanee which I did not understand, but they sounded like a dire threat.

The robbers left me where I lay and paid little attention to me, all except an old man with a white beard which contrasted oddly with his dark skin. He brought me food now and then or poured a few drops of water over my parched lips.

I found that the bandits spoke a dialect of the Hindoo tongue heard mostly at Calcutta. From hearing the servants speak, I had picked up the rudiments of the language. My attendant gave me further instruction, leading me to believe that my life had been spared that I might serve the robber band as an interpreter.

My captors were a wild and grim lot. When they were gathered around the fire of an evening, I thought of what an opportunity this would have

given some artist from my native land to paint from life the most picturesque and dramatic scenes imaginable.

Their black, sparkling eyes, their gaudy apparel and the glint of their long daggers as they carved the red meat and roasted at the fire great hunks spitted on the points of the weapons, would have made a picture of splendid effect.

But however picturesque the scene in the robbers' cave, it could not divert my thoughts from my probable fate, did I not soon find some way of escape from my prison. The outlook seemed hopeless. At times all the bandits left me, and as soon as I was strong enough to crawl about, although as yet too weak to stand on my legs, I seized such opportunities to explore the gloomy abode.

It seemed to consist of a number of caves, connected by artificial tunnels and occupied only at certain periods by human beings, for in some the ceilings were decorated with stalactites, indicating that nature had been left to her own devices.

Several of the caves were used as stables. In some were fine Arabian horses, in others, which were open at the top, elephants and camels were confined. Among them I thought I recognized the animals of our own caravan. The darkest caverns

were used as store rooms, where immense quantities of stolen goods were hidden. The caves occupied by the bandits themselves were fairly well lighted and ventilated by means of narrow fissures in the ceilings, not large enough to allow a man to crawl through.

Of course, there must be some other opening, by which the bandits went in and out, but I could not find it. When the fever left me and I was so far restored that my legs would carry me, my guard never left me for an instant.

I was on the verge of despair, for whatever plans of flight I might devise, they were undone by the watchfulness of the bandits. At last I became resigned to my fate and left all to the Lord. Then I grew calm and confident.

New hope sprang up in my soul when, one night, I learnt that a raid was to take place the next day. The bandits seemed to consult together whether to take me along. I pretended to sleep so as not to arouse their suspicion that I was listening. As they all talked at once, I caught very little of what was said. At times the confab grew so heated that the chief jumped to his feet and sought to restore order by striking mighty blows with his sword on the slab that served as a table. At length all

beakers were drained and lights out. Every one dozed off where he sat and I also fell asleep.

When I woke up next morning the cave was empty. The bandits were gone and not a weapon was left. I sat up quickly and saw, to my dismay, a gigantic robber crouching near me and eyeing me scornfully.

"Ah, you thought you were alone, did you; but there you were mistaken. Lie down, you Christian dog!"

Shocked and in sore disappointment, I lay down again. After lying motionless for a while, I begged for a drink from a large jug that was standing behind the rock used for a table. I knew it did not contain water, and as soon as the Hindoo discovered that it was wine, he took a good swig. And every time I repeated my demand for water, he took a new pull at the jug. When his eyes began to grow hazy, I sat up and looked around.

A flood of light coming from the adjoining cave led me to infer that the entrance, usually closed, was to be found there. My guard glared at me once again, this time with eyes heavier than before, then fell into a heavy sleep, his loud snores resounding through the cave.

My time to act had come. I rose to my feet

and with a coil of rope, on which I had rested my head, I formed a running noose and placed it loosely around the sleeping bandit's neck, making fast the other end to an iron ring in the wall, in such a manner that a sudden jerk would choke him. Then I moved cautiously toward the point whence the light came.

The rock that usually closed the entrance was rolled away. The bandits evidently had been in too great a hurry to put it back. I knew that the stable was in the adjoining cave. Fearing that all the horses would be gone, I looked in and found to my great joy that one was left, saddled and bridled, probably for the use of my guard. As quickly and gently as possible I led the animal out of the cave, after having tucked a bundle of hay under my arm. Climbing into the saddle, I whipped up the horse and rode at full speed through the forest, now and then dropping a wisp of hay.

Reaching a point where the woods thinned a little, I thought I heard human voices not far away. Supposing the party to be the returning bandits, I quickly hid behind a dense thicket, from which I myself had a good view. I could see a wide road and high mountains in the distance—indeed, it was the main route of the caravans, the way I had twice

passed. Motionless I stood back of the vines that completely hid me and the horse from view, listening closely for further sounds.

Soon I heard the quick tread of horses' hoofs and the familiar sound of a moving caravan. From behind a clump of trees it hove in sight. The sabres flashed in the sun, the turbans shone—it was a splendid caravan, carrying costly goods and treasures. Now was the time to act. At full gallop I rushed to the head of the caravan.

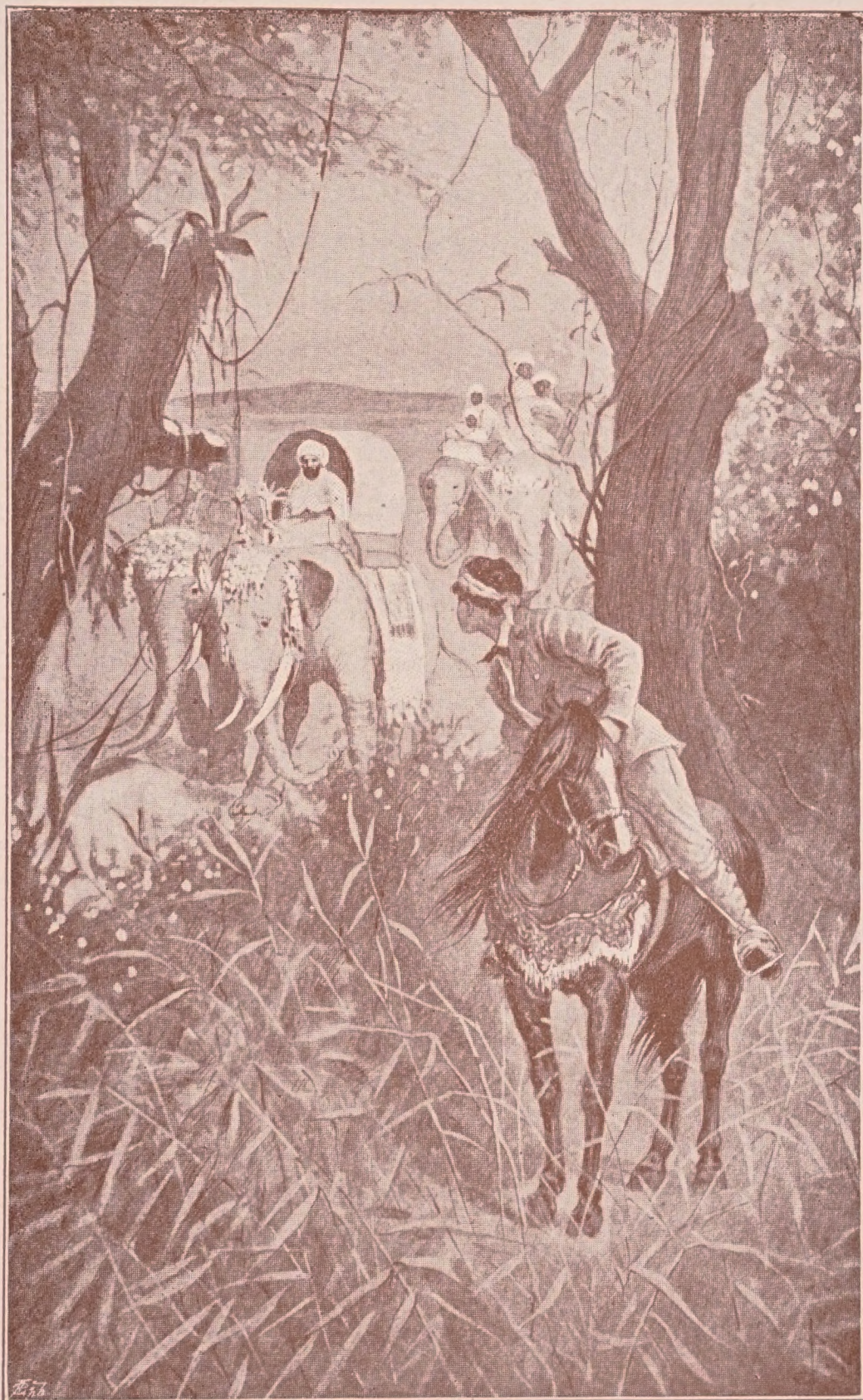
“Stop!” I shouted. “The robbers are lying in wait.”

Like an electric shock the news sped along the line. In an instant every man seized his rifle, and with hands on the triggers and sabres half-sheathed the caravan moved cautiously on.

Suddenly a shot sounded, and at the signal the robber band rushed forward. The attack was bravely met. Some of the outlaws were killed outright, the others were taken captive, the leader himself after a fierce resistance.

During the struggle I saw the chief of the band unbuckle his belt and throw it into the shrubbery. I took notice of the spot and afterwards found the belt, which I hid carefully.

Guided by the wisps of hay, we found our way



A great caravan came in sight.



to the cave. My guard, the burly Hindoo, awoke as we entered and had some trouble in getting rid of his uncomfortable necktie. He succeeded in getting his head out of the noose, but only to be made prisoner.

In the different chambers of the cave I found all the merchandise taken from our caravan and much valuable goods besides. The camels and elephants also were ours. A number of the men of the caravan I had forewarned helped me pack the goods on the backs of the animals, while the rest of the caravan camped near the road.

We were soon ready, and with heart overflowing with gratitude for God's providence, I joined the caravan and brought all the merchandise safely home under its protection.

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## XII.

### A DISCOVERY.

**A**BOUT sundown one evening we sighted the white palaces of Calcutta. In the city the inhabitants thronged around us, the crowd growing denser as we neared the Clermont office. The employees were closing for the day, but when they saw me they all hurried to meet me.

The members of my expedition, who had returned before me, were sent for and with the aid of the bills of lading they had brought home, the merchandise was unpacked and stored.

I myself hastened to the Clermont mansion, where I found the entire family, together with the Nortons, gathered in the sittingroom.

Every one stared at me, as though I had risen from the grave. No one uttered a word. In their faces I read consternation instead of pleasant sur-

prise. This was especially true of Richard Norton. He drew back as if stung by a viper, and his olive-colored face grew still paler.

The only person who seemed pleased at my coming was Miss Amy, but she was dumbfounded like the others. The first person to speak was Frank, who, after staring at me for a moment, threw his arms about me and welcomed me warmly.

"Is it really you!" he exclaimed. "At last we shall hear the truth about this sad affair."

"Yes; now we shall hear the full truth," Amy repeated.

"How so?" I asked. "Didn't they tell you the caravan was attacked by robbers who killed several men and carried me off captive? That I ever reached home is a miracle to me."

"A miracle, indeed," Norton murmured.

"No," said Mr. Clermont, "all we know is, that most of our people came back safely, but with the loss of all the merchandise and not knowing what became of it."

"Why, we were separated during the storm, and as I would not risk leaving the pack animals, we left it to the others to look us up. It was then we were attacked by the bandits, and being too few

to defend ourselves, we were overpowered and captured," I explained.

"Can you prove that?" Norton asked with a sneer.

"Yes, sir; if you doubt my word, you shall have the proofs in due time."

I told the full story of my adventures, omitting, however, the fact that the outlaws were my prisoners. Finding that I could explain everything, Norton pretended to be satisfied, and, excusing themselves with an engagement elsewhere, Norton and his mother took hurried leave.

Their going cleared the atmosphere, and the Clermonts now showed me greater friendliness than ever.

"The goods from Katmandoo," said I, turning to Mr. Clermont, "are now being put away in your store rooms, as you can see for yourself. And I hope, sir, you will find everything all right. But there is more serious business to attend to."

"What's that?" queried all the Clermonts in alarm.

"Well, the robbers were caught, leader and all, and brought here. They were with the caravan whose protection I enjoyed on my way home, and are now lodged in prison. So we have a trial on

our hands in a few days, and as I have every reason to suspect Mrs. Norton of complicity in the robbery plot, I must ask your permission to have her placed under surveillance at once."

"But are you sure of that?"

"Yes; absolutely. I will prove it in court."

"Well, hurry then!"

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## XIII.

### THE TRIAL.

**T**HE day set for the trial had come. When we reached the building where the court was to be held, the street outside was packed with humanity, and up the wide stairs streamed Englishmen and Hindoos anxious to witness the proceedings.

The judge sat in a high seat, over which were the arms of Great Britain, draped with crimson. Around a table sat the court officers, and at the bar stood the bandits and their chief, the latter being taller than any of the others.

He was a man of proud bearing, and to the question of the court who he was, he replied haughtily:

“I am a Sepoy of nobler blood than any other man in this room.”

So saying, he cast a glance full of hatred and vengeance over the assembled Englishmen. At all succeeding questions he preserved a dogged silence.

When the attempt to establish his identity thus failed, I handed to the judge the belt I had seen him throw away.

"Is this your cumberbund?" asked the judge. He nodded assent.

I now requested the interpreters to read the letters found hidden in the lining of the belt.

He translated the letters. According to Hindoo custom, they were tied with silken chords, but one having been sealed. This was written in a dainty, womanly hand, and the writer informed her "dear relative" that a British caravan, carrying a large supply of costly merchandise, was about to pass through the forest where he and his men were in hiding. The writer further said that the blonde young man in charge of the expedition (my appearance was minutely described) must be put out of the way at all hazards. She warned the leader against letting him escape, adding that he deserved no better fate than death, being one of the hated race which was depriving the Sepoys of their native soil, a rightful heritage from their fathers. The letter was signed, "Zuleima."

“Does any one present know this handwriting?” asked the judge.

Mr. Clermont and his son examined the letter.

“Yes,” said the elder gentleman painfully, “it is Mrs. Norton’s hand.”

The judge ordered her brought in, but he was informed that neither she nor her son could be found, although they had been kept under surveillance.

A murmur passed through the courtroom.

The present servants and employees of the house of Clermont wished nothing better than that the Nortons might be found and summarily punished. Richard Norton, however, was never heard of again. Mrs. Norton, on the other hand, was taken captive during the subsequent Sepoy revolt. The British commander, suspecting her of being a Hindoo princess, who incited her followers to awful cruelties to the Englishmen, kept her as a hostage until she took her own life while in prison.

When nothing was to be learned from either of the two principals, the robber chief and Mrs. Norton, the judge turned to the least guilty of the prisoners, the old man of the cave who had shown me kindness.

He testified that the leader of the bandits had

been a Brahmin and chief of his tribe. He was a brother of Mrs. Norton's first husband and had fled before the conquering British armies. His sister-in-law had been keeping in touch with him even after her marriage to the Englishman, Mr. Norton, and she had informed him of the movements of our caravan and other British mercantile expeditions as well. She had, in fact, aided the robbers in a number of raids on the hated Europeans.

A few days later the verdict was pronounced. In pursuance thereof the robber chief was shot. The haughty outlaw remained calm to the last, and died with his heart full of bitterness toward the British race.

With deep feeling we left the court room. I thanked God that the truth had come to light, but it still pained me to think that an innocent man had died on my account at the time of the attack. While I had been described as a blonde, the German botanist who was with me had a still lighter complexion than mine. Besides, I had been very much tanned during the trip, and, furthermore, the German wore a straw hat similar to the one my servant replaced with a turban at the last moment.

The memory of the kind and agreeable scientist

still remains fresh in my mind and my heart bleeds even yet at the thought of his sad fate.

Richard Norton had now been shown up as a plotter and a rascal. Fully convinced of his nefarious dealings and the utter worthlessness of the man he had hitherto trusted implicitly, Frank that very night resolved to lead a useful life and take a hand in the business himself.

Mr. and Mrs. Clermont were almost heartbroken. The noble-minded old merchant was so affected by the disclosures that he was unable to attend to business for several days.

Frank, on the other hand, was extremely active and industrious. It became my privilege to initiate him into every detail of the extensive business. When that was done, he went to his father with a request that he be made a partner in the firm. The elder Clermont, however, preferred to retire from active business life, so Frank and I formed a partnership and conducted the business with marked success for several years.

But while I was growing prosperous as an East India merchant, my longing for the old fatherland and for the loved ones left behind grew uncontrollable. My chief concern was how to arrange my affairs so that I could return home, yet strong bonds

of friendship fettered me and I was unable to leave Calcutta.

Mr. Clermont's health declined, and he grew weaker daily. A life of inactivity did not agree with him, and grief over the faithlessness of the man he had trusted above all others had crippled his ambition.

From the moment we first met, he had been like a father to me, and after I became a member of the firm he regarded me as his eldest son, frequently admonishing me to give Frank every assistance.

The sisterly Miss Amy was engaged to Sir Edward Forrester, the judge who presided at the trial of the Sepoy bandits. Their acquaintance was formed during the progress of the case, and as he was a worthy man we all heartily endorsed the union.

Miss Amy would not permit me to leave Calcutta before attending her wedding, "for," said she, jestingly, "you are the man who made the match."

On her wedding day she gave me a pretty souvenir of our pleasant associations—a portfolio of costly workmanship, bearing in enamel and jewels the legend, "*Truth Will Prevail.*"

Shortly after the wedding Mr. Clermont was

confined to the sickbed and not many weeks later I stood at the grave of my noble benefactor.

Frank was now so familiar with the ins and outs of the business as to manage it for himself. So I sold my interest at a fair price and bade him farewell in order to return to my native North.

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## XIV.

### MY FATHERLAND.

I STOOD on the bridge as the steamer approached Vinga, the rocky isle just outside of Gothenburg, and I shall never forget how my heart throbbed when, after eight long years, I saw again the rockbound shores of my native land.

Compared with the opulence of India, my own country seems barren indeed, and yet the little cottages surrounded by greening fields had a charm for me greater than Oriental palaces and tropical gardens. I was intoxicated with the very air. There is a dreamlike beauty, a sense of joyous anticipation, about the springtide in northern lands never met with elsewhere in the world. It thrills one with rapture sweeter than words can express.

All was as I had seen it on my first voyage out in the world. There was old Elfsborg with its

ancient square tower, and there the New Wharf, like an oasis amidst the barren gray cliffs. The vessel steamed along the shore and we passed close to the outer works of the old fort, near which the great Carnegie factories are now located. I surveyed the establishment until my eye stopped at a little newly built chapel, founded on the solid rock.

At Cliff Station the customs officials came on board, and as the great British steamers did not at this time run all the way in, we had to be taken ashore in boats.

At the first opportunity, I hustled my baggage into one of the boats that met us and told the oarsman to take me ashore without delay. As he nodded, I thought I recognized the face. The deep-set gray eyes and the bushy red whiskers brought back distinct recollections of some one I could not name until a man shouted:

“Look out, Chris, you’re getting too close to her!”

If he was my old comrade, he had changed quite a good deal for the better, which at first I could not believe.

“Chris—is that your name?” I inquired.

“Yes, sir.”

"Did you ever sail on the brig 'Aurora,' Captain Ehrnberg?"

"Why do you ask that, sir?" he queried in turn, as if nettled by the question.

"Because then you must have known Carl Lennartson, the cabin boy."

"Yes, and thank God for it. If it hadn't been for him I wouldn't be earning my daily bread today. Nor would I have bread for my immortal soul. He went down with the 'Orion,' poor boy! The good ship 'Orion' that burned at sea some years ago, you remember."

"Yes, I know; I was an intimate friend of Carl Lennartson. That makes me interested in your story too. If you don't mind, I'd like to know what became of you after you two parted company."

"Glad to tell you, sir," said he. "The Lord has done such great things with me that I never get tired of talking about it. You may have heard, sir, that I was put in jail. And that was not more'n right, for I was a tough one. But then nobody ever showed me the right way. Well, prison life got pretty tiresome."

"But the prisoners had to work, didn't they?"

"Sure we did. Worked hard all day. I was in the Varberg prison, and we were never out of

work there, let me tell you. They kept their eye on us every minute of the day, but when night came and we were sent to the lockup—Oh, what a time! We were all in one big room and I tell you it was awful the way they carried on. Having tried it myself, I want to say that it is ruinous to herd people that way—ruinous to body and soul. And I want to thank the king for trying to make it a bit more tolerable for the poor prisoners. But there's nothing like freedom, after all. When ye're locked up, time's pretty long, and one Sunday, to kill an hour or two, I hauled out a little tract that that boy Lennartson gave me when we parted. I glanced at it and read these words: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' and, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' These words gave me no peace of mind day or night. When I asked the warden for a Bible, the other prisoners laughed at me, but I kept on reading, and when the chaplain came and preached to us now and then I thought he was talking to me and to nobody else. After I had been reading some, I began to try to pray. It was hard at first, for such a sinner as I was, I didn't dare to come before the Lord. So one day I read about the rob-

ber on the cross. Then it was just like the Lord telling me, too, to come into paradise with Him. That made me so happy, I couldn't keep from talking about the Lord to the other prisoners. Curses was all the thanks I got for it, and many a dark hour did I pass through before I was let out.

"I'll remember as long as I live how glad I was when I left the pen and started out to look for work. But I found soon enough how hard it is for an ex-convict to get a job. Nobody wants a jailbird to work for him, and for a while it looked like I'd have to steal for a living or starve to death. Then I remembered that passage in the Bible: 'Ask, and it shall be given to you.' And so I prayed that the Lord would find me something to do. I walked around a couple of days, ready to give up hope, when John came. You remember old John on the brig. Well, he helped me get this here boat, but after all, it is the poor boy I have to thank for what I've got."

I was deeply moved by the story told by Chris and thanked God that I had been the means of converting that once ungodly sailor.

"But," he continued after a moment's silence, "since you were a friend of Carl Lennartson, I don't

mind telling you what pleases me most is to take care of his pious old mother."

"My mother!—What?—Is she in want?"— I gasped.

The oarsman stared at me.

"You are not Carl Lennartson, are you?"

"Yes, my friend, so I am. Tell me at once how you happened to meet my mother."

"Well, the ways of the Lord are past finding out. The pious old lady, God bless her, lives with me in a little shanty, and her son has come to be such a fine young gentleman."

I smiled and asked him to take me straightway to her.

"But I want to tell you, sir, that it is nothing but an old tumbledown shack up in the hills."

"Then we will land at the ballast pier. That's the nearest way."

Upon landing, Chris called a boy to watch my baggage while we were gone.

On our way up the hills he told me about the Gyllenfeldts. While they were in Stockholm, one winter, the superintendent of the estate, who wanted the cottage occupied by my mother for another tenant, a relative of his, had her put out of house and home on some pretext or other. She then

sought refuge with a relative in Gothenburg, who was one of the crew of the 'Orion.' When Chris mentioned his name, I remembered him well. So when my mother reached his house, she learned from his children, who were motherless, that their father had lost his life at the burning of the ship.

"You can imagine how she felt," Chris went on. "She didn't know where to turn. At last she went back to the pier, thinking some boat might take her back to the country free of charge. I was taking out emigrants that day and landed at the stairs to get more passengers. Then I caught sight of your mother, and the minute I set eyes on her I thought of Charlie, the cabin boy—you, sir, for you look so much like her. I asked her why she was crying, and when she told me her story, I said I knew her boy on board the 'Aurora,' and if she didn't have a home, she was welcome to come and stay at my place. So she did, and the Lord has blessed our work, hers and mine, so we've got along. She does sewing and knitting, and earns enough to afford a room all by herself. She's just like a mother to me, and keeps house and tends to everything at home. Every penny I give to her for safekeeping, and there isn't a corner in my heart she doesn't know. She chides me and com-

forts me off and on, and it's all for my own good. —Here we are."

Pressing his hand gratefully, I followed Chris up a narrow alley to a little old house in bad repair, with high stairs and a bench of beehives in front. Some ragged children were playing around the stairs. My guide asked me to wait outside while he went in to "warn the old lady," as he put it.

"Just as you say," I agreed, but followed him up the stairs and into a hallway.

He opened a door, and in a small room sat my mother spinning. How much older she had grown these twelve years since I left home! Under a checked kerchief her hair showed snowy white. There were deep furrows in her face and the eyes were sunken. The lines about the mouth told of great grief, but the lips showed fortitude and calm resignation, while kindness and cheer beamed from her still undimmed eyes. To me in that moment she seemed even more beautiful than in her younger days. Just as Chris entered, she drew the back of her hand across the eyes.

"Sure and you aren't crying," he said cheerfully. "I've brought a gentleman who likes to meet you, being as he knew your boy Carl."

"Who might that be?" she asked, growing curious, and pushed back the spinningwheel with such suddenness that the thread parted.

"You mustn't get so excited, mother, but keep cool, and maybe the good Lord will send Carl himself back to you," Chris went on as if in pleasantry.

I could restrain myself no longer. The next moment my dear mother was in my embrace, while we mingled tears of joy.

Chris drew a blue shirtsleeve across his eyes. When we heard him loudly praise God for this blessed reunion, we both sank to our knees in prayer, giving thanks to the Lord for all that had befallen us, joys and sorrows alike.

After rising to our feet, we stood for some moments looking closely at one another. She recognized my eyes, she said, but could hardly believe that her ruddy and fairhaired boy would ever turn so brown and raise such heavy, dark mustaches.

"Nor ever wear such fine clothes," she added, giving my apparel a critical look and stroking my sleeve again and again. She could hardly convince herself that it was really her own son that had come back. She was afraid it might all be a dream and dreaded a rude awakening. I assured her she

need have no fears on that score, as I had come to stay with her for good and all. Overjoyed at the thought she went from smiles to tears and from tears back to beaming smiles.

Chris brought some fresh water to cool her, and after she had regained her composure, we sat down side by side on a simple wooden lounge which served as a bed at night.

Now I had to tell her my story from the time I left home. Chris hesitated whether to stay or leave the room, but I asked him to remain. He then said:

"Mr. Lennartson, would you mind if I went to fetch old John? He sails on the brig 'Unity,' which happens to be in port here just now. He grieved terribly to hear that Charlie, the cabin boy, was lost, and I'm sure he'd be glad to see him alive again."

"All right, Chris, go and fetch him, then. That old boy was a great blessing to me, and I am eager to thank him for all that I learnt from him."

Chris hove a sigh of relief as he went. When he was gone, I expressed my joy to find him so changed.

"You cannot imagine, mother, what a hardened and ungodly fellow he was."

"God's ways are not our ways," she said. "He causes the desert to rejoice and blossom like a rose. He is also powerful to save hard and sinful hearts, and you were fortunate indeed to serve as His instrument."

"In reality it was not through me, but through Clara's teacher, Miss Millicent, that God accomplished this. For it was she who sent the little tract, the seed that bore such blessed fruit," said I. "But speaking of Miss Clara, are her parents still living, and how are they all at Lindesvik?"

"Really, I cannot say. But while I was there, they were all very good to me, Miss Clara most of all. But that was years ago, and since then I have heard nothing from them directly. It has been rumored that the young barons turned out badly and spent so much money that their father will be compelled to sell the estate, if he hasn't already done so. But, as I said, I know nothing about them for sure. I often thought I would try to learn something from Miss Clara, but she has been away from home mostly, and I didn't know her address. But after I came here, thank God, I have been well provided for. Christian is a good worker, and after he took the pledge, he turns over to me every penny he earns. It was our dear pastor who influ-

enced him to quit drinking. He came to see me while I was ill, so ill that prayers were offered for me in church. This was when I first came to live with Christian and had just learnt that you had been lost. The pastor then spoke so kindly to him also, that he opened his heart to the Lord's servant, and after that he has attended services regularly. One day he came home and told me he had taken the pledge. Do you know, Carl, since I met this good pastor, I have often wished you had lived to become such a servant of the Lord, for when godfearing men devote themselves to the holy ministry, there is no calling so blessed as that. But as you were gone, I prayed to God that he might awaken the hearts of many other young men like you and give them grace to become true spiritual leaders of men."

Chris now returned, bringing old John with him, and our talk was interrupted. The old tar took some time to convince himself that I was really the cabin boy he had known, and in a sort of naive bewilderment also closely examined my coat and expressed pleasure at finding the former comrade turned into such a fine gentleman.

My mother put away her spinningwheel and lit a fire in the open fireplace, for although it was in

the month of May and the weather was springlike, I, having just come from sunny India, felt rather chilly.

We drew our chairs close to the fireside. John lit his pipe. Chris, leaning his elbows on his knees, supporting his chin with both hands, sat staring thoughtfully into the flames. Mother held my hand in both of hers while I narrated my adventures in foreign climes.

Not until midnight did we bid one another good-night, and then I sought the hotel to which Chris had thoughtfully had my baggage sent.

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## XV.

### LINDESVIK.

**T**HE next day found me on my way north. At noon the boat turned into the Uddevalla fjord. The sun smiled on the bright green fields and the prim little villages, and I thought Gustafsberg, with its red, white and yellow houses gleaming from among the pine trees, looked the most charming spot on earth.

I went straight to the public inn, where I ordered coffee. While I sipped the beverage, I learnt from a talkative waitress that baron Gyllenfeldt with his family was now at Lindesvik; that his sons had well-nigh ruined him with their extravagance, compelling him to dispose of the estate; that Miss Louise was engaged to a poverty-stricken curate, and that Miss Clara intended to take a position as governess.

Having finished my coffee, I ordered a carriage, and a quarter of an hour later I was riding comfortably along the road to Lindesvik.

Overwhelmed by boyhood recollections, I could no longer sit still, and, ordering the driver to stop, I stepped out and walked.

Trees, shrubs and lawns were fresh with tender verdure. The earliest flowers of spring had a charm that day never felt before or after. There was nothing here of the dazzling color effects of the tropics, none of the broad-leaved luxuries of the flora of the South and none of the gaudiness of its fauna, but the larks in the sky and the thrush in the pine-tree sang the praises of spring, while from the distance came the note of the cuckoo—that was enough for me. As often of old, I stopped to listen whence it came. From the west, sure enough, and as that was an old sign of good luck, I hurried confidently on my way.

Some scrawny cows came strolling leisurely down the lane. They seemed to call my attention to the neglected condition of the place. I just passed a rustic seat where I had often sat reading. It was but a heap of rotten staves.

The court-yard was as green as the meadows.

The stucco on the walls of the manorhouse had loosened in spots, revealing large areas of red brick.

There was not a sign of life about the place, and when I tried to ring the doorbell, I got a part of the bell-chord in my hand. I knocked gently at the door, then pounded it vigorously, until finally a maid-servant appeared.

“Do I find the Gyllenfeldts at home?”

At my question the girl looked me over suspiciously, then told me to wait and she would find out whether they would receive.

“Kindly say, that a traveler would like to look at the estate, which he learns is for sale.”

I handed her my card, with which she disappeared through the familiar hallway leading to the kitchen. Returning, she asked me into the drawing-room.

Only on rare festive occasions had I been permitted in times past to set my foot in this room. To my childish mind it had stood for the height of luxury, and I still had a feeling of awe as the maid led the way up the stairs.

When I looked in at the door, I was shocked to find the room so small and tawdry. The curtains were missing, and the few remaining pieces of furniture scattered about the room were dusty and

faded. There was a depressing air about the whole place.

I stepped over to the window. The garden below was sadly neglected, but beyond was a grassy slope studded with clumps of beautiful trees, oaks, elms and lindens, standing out against the silvery waters of the bay.

The view would have been charming to any eye, but to mine, in my present state of mind, it was nothing short of entrancing. I wondered whether I really should have the good fortune to come into possession of all this. If so, I would see my fondest dreams realized.

I harked back to the day I left. The thought of the ill-fated ring came instantly to my mind, and then I took from my pocket a little box. To reassure myself, I opened it. Yes, there it was, a splendid ruby ring, which I had ordered made in Paris and set with the jewels I had purchased in Katmandoo. This I intended to present to the baroness at the proper time.

But suppose they should refuse to believe me. Suppose they should suspect that my fortune was the creation of my fancy. Rather than face such a humiliation, thought I, I ought to have remained in India to my dying day.

I was almost on the point of stealing away, when a door opened and Lady Gyllenfeldt entered.

"Mr. Leonard, I trust you will pardon my husband's delay. He is detained by business matters," said she and asked me to be seated.

We talked of the weather and matters of like moment. I was surprised that she had changed so slightly. She had always been pale and slender, and but for the added impress of sorrow in her features, which gave deeper expression to her face, I could discern little change. There was the same sweetness and kindness in her tone.

After I had informed myself as to the tenants and subordinates of the estate, without disclosing my identity, the baron and Miss Louise appeared.

Time had not been so kind to Baron Gyllenfeldt. His hair had turned gray, his back was bent, and he moved with difficulty. The powerful man I had once known was now a tottering invalid.

Miss Louise had also changed, but to her advantage. The tall, hoidenish girl was now a lady of stately appearance and dignified bearing. Her face was pale and serious, but her former coldness had disappeared. The ice of youth's early spring-time had melted before the warmer sun of womanhood.

I had little time for further observations, for the old baron came straight to the point. He held forth volubly in praise of the property, from which I inferred that he was very anxious for a chance to sell. He finally invited me to look over the estate and asked his wife and daughter to accompany us on a tour of inspection. "I am not as agile as I used to be, Mr. Leonard," he explained, "but age will get the best of us, you know."

We started down through the avenue of old linden-trees, on which the baron made a long speech, and there met a prim little lady carrying a basket of wild flowers.

She was flushed with the warmth of the sun and the brisk walk and her hat hung by an elastic band at her elbow. A wealth of golden tresses encircled her face, and under the finely arched eyebrows of a darker shade beamed a pair of soulful deep-blue eyes. She came up smiling sweetly, and I instantly recognized the good angel of my childhood, Miss Clara, now developed into the fairness and loveliness of prime womanhood.

I was about to call her by name, when the baron summoned all his dignity and went through the forms of a ceremonious introduction.

"Mr. Leonard," he added, "is thinking of pur-

chasing dear old Lindesvik," and at these words Miss Clara's smiles at once gave way to a look of sadness.

"It grieves you, Miss Gyllenfeldt, to have to part with your beautiful home, that I can well understand," I said with some feeling, "but pray do not take it to heart, so long as the deal is not yet closed."

"We must all submit to fate and make the most of our circumstances, isn't that the philosophy of life, Mr. Leonard?" pleaded the baron.

I bowed assent. The baron placed one arm around Miss Clara's shoulders for support.

"Now, little one," said he, "we'll go up to the pavilion first, and take in the view of the bay, and then down the brook-road."

I was pained to see the feeble old gentleman struggle up the hill for my sake. I knew the scenes from the top of the hill better than he, as that had been one of my favorite haunts while a boy. There I used to lie prone in the grass reading or day-dreaming. Then the little pagoda that crowned the hilltop was well kept; now it was crumbling.

On our way along the brook-road, the baron was keeping up the conversation all by himself. I answered his questions mechanically, for my mind



And there was the ring,



was on other matters. I thought I heard every tree and bush tell again the awful tale of the lost ring. When we reached the fatal bridge, I caught myself exclaiming, as on the day of the search:

“Here it was!”

They all stared at me. Clara’s face flushed quickly.

In my bewilderment I pushed my cane between the logs of the bridge. It stuck fast, and as I pulled it back, something glistened at the end of it. I held it up, and—indeed, there was the ring with its ruby and diamonds still lustrous.

“My grandmother’s ring!” exclaimed the baroness; “and we blamed the poor boy for stealing it.”

“But now you see that he spoke the truth,” said I. “My dear baroness, I am that unfortunate boy. You were always kind to him, and he will always remain your debtor for the bringing up you gave him. God has heard my prayers, and in a wonderful manner *truth has prevailed.*”

All eyes turned from me to the ring and from the ring back to me.

“For twelve years it has been hidden there,” said the baroness at last. Then she took my hand in both of hers and asked my kind forgiveness for

the suspicion they had borne against me all that time.

Bending over, I placed her hand to my lips and said:

“My dear madame, for these twelve years I thank the Lord with all my heart. They have been tedious school-days to me, but not one of them would I now miss.”

“Yes, we have all, no doubt, had our trials,” said Miss Louise in a tender tone.

Miss Clara's smiles rivaled the sunshine, but the old gentleman was still puzzled. He was almost unable to get rid of the idea that I had perished with the ‘Orion.’ Not until he had carefully compared the new ring with the old one was he fully convinced that Carl Lennartson and I were one and the same person.

After having finished a late luncheon, the old people retired for a siesta and left me with the young ladies.

Miss Clara was very reticent, leaving her elder sister to entertain me. She told me about the brothers. Charles Emil had resigned from the army service and gone to farming, and Herman had emigrated to America. His letters were quite satisfactory. The old parson of the parish, a first rate

farmer but a poor guardian of souls, was dead, and Miss Louise wondered who would be his successor. The choice would rest with the man who purchased Lindesvik.

Turning to Miss Clara, I asked whether they had any certain one in mind. She mentioned Rev. Ortenheim.

The afternoon coffee having been served, the baron expressed his desire to hear my "fabulous story," and I sat far into that bright May evening narrating my experiences, and when we bade each other goodnight at a late hour, day had only faded into twilight.

That never ending daylight in the North was so new to me now, that I sat, long after the others had retired, at my open window, listening to the vesper song of the thrush and reviewing the events of the day. When I finally sought my bed, my dreams wafted me afar to my friends in Calcutta.

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## XVI.

### UNDER THE LINDENS.

ON the following day I purchased Lindesvik. The Gyllenfeldts reserved the right to remain for the summer, a condition with which I was highly pleased.

My first act as proprietor of the estate was to appoint Rev. Ortenheim rector of the parish. Shortly after, Miss Louise's engagement to the new pastor was celebrated. He was a man of worth, whose influence on the character of his affianced had been such that the parents had not for a moment hesitated to give their consent to the union with one beneath her in social station. This was gratifying to me, for it inspired the hope that there would be little prejudice left when I should make bold to ask for the hand of Miss Clara.

After we had plighted our troth with the con-

sent of her parents, the work of restoring the old mansion was begun and rapidly pushed. The old couple planned to make their home in Stockholm, but it was decided to celebrate a double wedding at Lindesvik before they left the old manor.

So the adored of my youth became my beloved wife and now, five years after, she is sitting by my side under the lindens. In her lap sits Amy, a fair-haired little cherub, who is laughing boisterously at the pranks and antics of her brother Frank. He is three years old and his greatest delight is to play peek-a-boo with mamma and little sister behind the trunks of the grand old trees.

When the children grow quiet, I read to my wife what I have been writing. Then we are both carried on memory's tide far away to childhood days and we fold our hands in prayer to the good Lord, thanking him for greater happiness and richer blessings than we had ever hoped for.

In my past life I have had many a trial, but my heavenly Father has followed me with His eye, and I have learnt to take everything as from His hand, to discern His love even in His punishment. But even though we are resigned to our fate and have learned the lesson that, come good or evil, all is for the best, yet we are often in the dark and

many a question is left unanswered. We look forward to the time when all things shall be made clear, when we shall see him, not as in a glass darkly, but face to face, in the fullness of light.

The thoughts here penned were first awakened in my mind by my dear old mother, and she continues to instill into my soul the greatest of all wisdom—eternal truth.

I visit her daily, for the way is not long that leads to her little white cottage. It nestles among yonder pine-trees. The windows are wreathed with vines. In the light and cozy little rooms within she is kept busy with light household duties or with knitting, spinning or reading her Bible. Her health is failing by degrees, and I fear she may not long remain to enjoy the sunshine which never fell across her way till well along toward the evening of her life.

I would have wished to have her live with us, but she wanted a little home of her own, and her wishes were respected. But it is our pleasure to pay her a visit every day. It is the children's delight to go down to grandmother's and taste of her strawberries and goodies or sit, if but for a moment, in her lap. They get along famously together, and to Frank she has already begun to

tell, in her own delightful way, little stories from the Bible.

I had also hoped that Christian, her friend and benefactor, would accompany her to Lindesvik, where I could easily have found suitable work for him, but he declined my invitation saying he had better keep on working in the calling that God had given him.

He is a man who lives and works as he believes. He looks for young sailors, talks to them of God's mercy as shown to him, reads to them from the Word of God and urges them to take the pledge of temperance. As he once totally abandoned himself to evil-doing, so he now devotes all his energies to the service of the Lord in seeking to guide men into the way of salvation.

From my friends in India I often receive letters. Amy and her husband are now in England, where Sir Edward has inherited from his father a large estate named Forrester Hill. Frank is still in Calcutta, but intends soon to come back to Europe. He tells me an old Hindoo servant confessed on his death-bed that he was bribed by Norton to burn the letters I wrote home instead of mailing them.

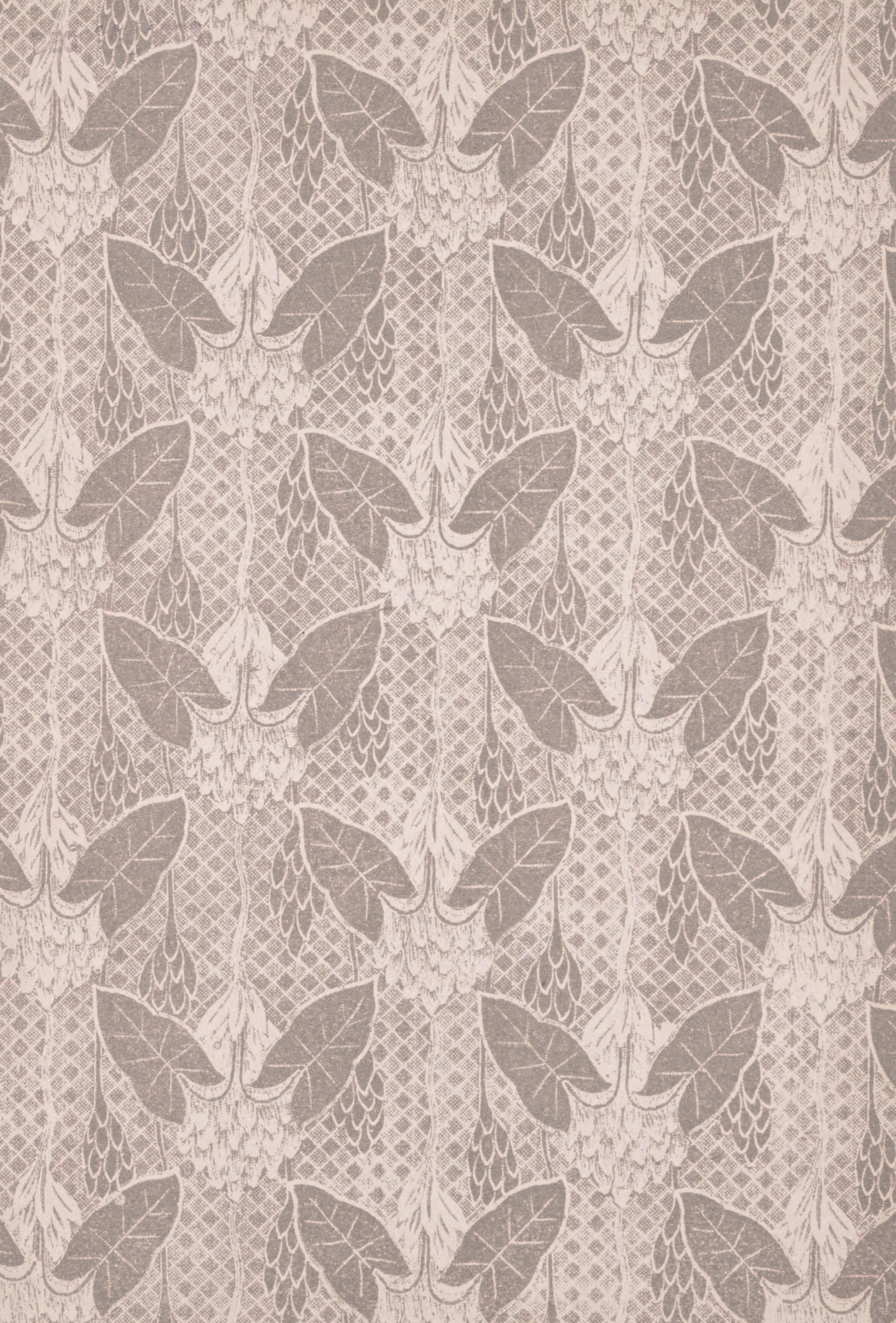
It is a day in July. The linden-trees are all

abloom. Their fragrance is almost surfeiting, and myriads of bees are busy carrying honey to the hives near and far. My book is finished. The honey I have gathered from the flowers of memory is all in the comb. I take my wife's dainty hand in mine and watch the ring with the oriental ruby and diamonds give back the rays of the sun in prismatic colors. Failing of its original purpose, it served to seal our betrothal, and bears, besides my initials, the legend:

*TRUTH WILL PREVAIL.*

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